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BACON'S NOVA RESUSCITATIO



BACON'S NOVA RESUSCITATIO

OR

The Unveiling of his Concealed Works
and Travels

BY THE
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'IS IT SHAKESPEARE?' 'THE BIBLIA CABALISTICA,' 'THE BIBLIA ANAGRAMATICA,' ETC

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOL. II.—THE EXIT OF SHAKSPERE



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THE EXIT OF SHAKSPERE

CHAPTER I

PREFATORY

IN my former book entitled 'Is it Shakespeare?' (John Murray, 1903) I showed that Francis Bacon was the author of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' and that two famous critics living at the time knew these poems to be Bacon's, and said so as nearly as they dared.

In my present volume I have added so many new facts and discoveries that I think its title is justified. However, the unprejudiced reader must be the judge of this.

The statements of my former book have never been refuted; but it appears that some readers were offended because they thought I tried to defame Bacon. I did no such thing. I sought only the truth. Why should I try to defame the hero of my own book?—a man, too, who had

never done me any harm, and died long before I was born? Why should anyone try to defame the great men of the past? I had no wish but to discover truth, and I think my present book will show this.

My present book was virtually finished before the great Shakespeare Memorial was brought forward. That is not, therefore, discussed here. I may, however, say that I am in favour of the suggested memorial in so far as it may extend the knowledge and study of the immortal Shakespeare's works. It will be naturally inferred that I should not give the Stratford genius the place of honour.

I hope the rather presumptuous sound of the title of my book will be excused by the candid reader when he hears the strong evidences I bring forward to justify it. But before plunging forthwith into the evidences, I wish to make what seems to me to be some rather important remarks—in fact, I look at them as the Alpha and Omega of the whole controversy; and so I venture to introduce them both at the beginning and the ending of my book. They are these :—

In the first place it appears to be not a very hard matter to discover who was the real author of the

immortal plays and poems, and it seems to me an extraordinary thing that people should have gone on wrangling and writing books on both sides for these forty years over a matter which is so easily decided. It is surely enough if one good and impartial critic who lived in those times be found to declare implicitly, but clearly enough, that Bacon was the author ; for if we have one contemporary witness of this sort, there is such a tremendous amount of corroborative evidence, both from the internal character of the works and from the lives and comparative culture of Bacon and Shakspeare, that everything would work together to induce us to take this one critic's word. But I have shown, both in the present work and my former one, that there is not only one critic, but several, and they the best of their time, who implicitly and allusively declare Bacon was the author ; while there is no single literary critic contemporary with the Stratford man, who in clear and definite language either explicitly or implicitly declared William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon to be the author either of the poems or the plays. I do not here refer to the large amount of evidence that has been gathered for Bacon and against Shakespeare, for I think the candid consideration of the facts above stated

ought to make an end of this really very one-sided controversy.

In the second place, if we try to form a correct conception of the manner in which our Elizabethan drama arose, we shall inevitably be taken to the dramatists of Italy, Spain, and France. These three countries left the fogs of the Middle Ages, and passed into the brighter and lighter air of the Renaissance, earlier than England, and consequently when our first native dramatists and poets essayed to improve the old miracle plays and moralities, and when there was a demand for something better than rude horse-play and jiggling rhymes of mother-wits, it was to Italy, France, and Spain that our best literary workmen looked for patterns and novelties, and it was there that they found them. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century was laid the glorious foundation of our English drama, and in its earlier stages it was in no way inferior to that of any Continental country. Nay, thanks to the immortal Shakespeare productions, it rose almost to the acme of perfection in the first twenty or thirty years after its renewed or Renaissance origin. But for anyone to boast of our immortal Elizabethan drama as a glorious native product would

be a plain exposure of literary ignorance. The stones were laid in this country, but they were nearly all quarried abroad. The plays, whether tragedy or comedy, were in English—that was an absolute necessity; but in nearly all else they were ‘adaptations’ in style, subject-matter, and stage-characters from the earlier plays and tales of Italy and other Continental nations that had breathed the new vivifying spirit earlier than ourselves.

If, then, it be admitted, and it can hardly be denied, that the beginnings of the Italian and French drama were anterior to our own, and that they served as the great pioneers for our countrymen when we began to enter upon the new up-sloping ways of dramatic representation—if it be also allowed that the art, beauties, and methods of these Continental pioneers of the Renaissance drama could hardly be grasped adequately without the ability to read them easily in their own language—then it must also be allowed that Will Shakspeare of Stratford would have been most heavily handicapped; for many plays of the Italian pioneers would have been as a sealed book to him, and possibly the same with the French ones, and certainly with Lopez de Vega and the Spanish patterns.

But how different with Francis Bacon ! We may say, with some degree of confidence, that there was not a single young man of his generation who was more qualified than he by linguistic, philosophic, and dramatic gifts (for he was an early arranger of dumb-shows and interludes) to write the immortal plays of the end of the sixteenth century. I am sure Bacon knew Ariosto and his comedies well. I do not believe Shakspeare could or did read a word of them. Ariosto was the father of *commedia erudita*—i.e., the scholarly comedy suited to the taste of gentlemen and the aristocrats of the Court circle. What was understood then by decorum was a special feature of such plays, and the Shakespeare plays have this, although they may sometimes pass the limits of our decorum, which is somewhat more rigid.

The result of the preceding remarks may be briefly summed up thus :—

From the internal character of the immortal plays and their Italian and French connections, we are bound to say, judging *a priori*, that William Shakspeare of Stratford, who was no traveller, was quite unequal to such productions.

The remaining part of this book shall be

chiefly devoted to showing the same thing about Shakspeare *a posteriori*.

I have but one word more, and that is in the nature of personal acknowledgment. I cannot conclude this preface without expressing my many thanks for the great assistance rendered to me by my friend Dr. R. M. Theobald, M.A., and also by Dr. Tebb, of Hampstead. After my blindness had set in, Dr. Tebb went through the whole work with me again, and Dr. Theobald has revised the proofs for the press. I owe some suggestions to them for making the books shorter, for which I am sure some busy men will be grateful.

June, 1905.

CHAPTER II

THE INABILITY TO SAY 'BACON'

I THINK we most of us remember that amusing cartoon where a great British statesman is shown trying to make a parrot (Mr. Kruger) say 'Suzerainty.' I doubt whether Mr. Chamberlain ever had to tackle a more difficult job. But it has often struck me that it is, if possible, a still more difficult task to induce a confirmed Shakespearian to say 'Bacon.'

What *are* we authors to do? We are in most parlous case. If we write a short popular account, it is accounted threadbare twaddle;—if we carefully gather together a large mass of evidence, no busy man of letters has the time either to read it or digest it. I say, then, that from an obstinate, though often unconscious, prejudice, and from a want of painstaking research into the merits of the controversy, there is at the present time with the majority of the English-speaking race a

marked inability to say 'Bacon.' And I would add that in Elizabethan times also, when both Shakespeare and Bacon were alive, there was the same inability to say 'Bacon,' though from very different reasons.

It is important to understand this, for one of the commonest and most prevailing of all orthodox arguments is this:—viz., that Bacon's contemporaries must have known who was the real author, and the very fact that they did not attribute the plays or poems to Bacon shows 'as clear as daylight' that he did not write them.

But this argument of the orthodox is by no means so strong as it looks. I admit that in these days of the liberty of the press it *seems* ridiculous to say that Elizabethan literary critics 'dared not say right out that Bacon was the author,' and I think many orthodox Shakespearians utterly scoff at such an absurd assertion, the real reason being that they are unacquainted with the methods of press censorship in Baconian days. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London counted then for very much more than they do now, and there was the Star Chamber, and there was the pillory; there was the case of cutting off the offending hand with an axe, and applying the cauterizing iron to the bleeding stump till

the poor printer or author roared like a bull before the assembled crowd. An honourable and conscientious writer might have his ears cropped off or sliced off or nailed to the posts without a moment's hesitation if he had offended the 'powers that be' or the leading rulers of the State.

Look at poor Prynne and saintly Leighton, of 'Sion's Pleas against the Prelacie,' and many others. Consider how few dared to write or print anything against Bishops, and, if they did, how rigorously were their secret presses hunted out and destroyed, and the chief actors hanged (sometimes in private), if they could only be caught!

To calumniate the dominant party in Church or State in those days was to get short shrift indeed if they seized you for it. Now, Bacon belonged by birth and associates to the dominant class both in politics and religion. Whitgift, the Archbishop, was his tutor at Trinity, and his protecting friend afterwards, and probably got 'Venus and Adonis' through the press for him. But, anyhow, all historians agree that Bacon was a man of considerable influence, even in early days, in Parliament and also with the Queen, and with Essex, Southampton, Walsingham, and other

rising men and approved statesmen, who recognised his talents. That he also took his share on the side of the Bishops in the Martin Marprelate Controversy I fully believe, and have evidence ready. But my point now is, that a man would think twice in those days before he ventured to 'name' Bacon (as it was called), or to offend or calumniate him, and that he could be laid hold of or prosecuted for it. It is by no means mere conjecture that Bacon could, by his influence and surroundings, make matters very unpleasant, and even dangerous, for any who tried their loose tongues on *him*.

This, then, as I take it, is one great reason why Bacon was never *named* by contemporaries as the concealed author of so many literary marvels. It was the *naming* that brought danger of *scandalum magnatum*, or criminal libel, and both Nash and Ben Jonson, bold and unscrupulous satirists as they were, saved their ears by the plea which they both personally used on more than one occasion, that 'they named no one.' Some of Harvey's enemies, and Nash was amongst them, wanted to get Harvey into trouble for satirizing the Earl of Oxford in the 'Speculum Tuscanismi'; but Gabriel Harvey denied aiming at the Earl at all, and, as the Earl was nowhere named, Harvey with some trouble and, it seems,

apologies got out of danger. Marston and Hall, with their *Labeo* and *mediocria firma*, sailed very close to the wind, but there was no naming of Bacon, and consequently, though their books were stayed or prohibited, neither Hall nor Marston were ever prosecuted. And though Jonson ran greater risks, he was only threatened by Bacon, and not prosecuted, as he tells us in Epigram LIV.:

‘Cheveril cries out my verses libels are,
And threatens the Star Chamber and the Bar.’

And that Cheveril means Bacon is one of the facts that critics cannot wipe out.

But I have said quite enough to prove my point, and if people will still persist in saying that some one *must* have mentioned Bacon’s authorship in all those years, it should be remembered that the difficulty of reference to him was often covered by the *nom de guerre* Shake-speare, and there was no danger in using that. There were plenty of contemporaries who, when they saw Shake-speare’s ‘Sonnets’ in prominent type on the title-page of the 1609 first complete edition, knew well enough who the man with the hyphen was—but they did not *name* him.

Alleyn, the great tragedian, had the curiosity to buy a copy for 6d., but he never named the author,

though he knew his name well enough. Moreover, there were doubtless other reasons of a political or Court character which were mixed up with Bacon's career both early and late, and his probable missions or travels for Essex, Leicester, and perhaps the Queen. All these circumstances required strict reticence. And then, again, young Francis belonged to Sidney's set, and knew Bruno, and had, I am afraid, the reputation in early days of being a 'conjurer,' and somewhat unsound in theology. Here again reticence would be required; it would hardly do to say that he was the conjurer who was responsible for Dr. Faust and the Shepherd's Kalendar, or its vestibule at least; for that would set people asking questions which were not proper to be answered. And if the cuckoo cry is still repeated, 'Someone *must* have mentioned Bacon in print, or at least thrown out clearer hints than we now possess,' I would answer that, if that *did* happen, Bacon and his influential friends, and especially his friend and old tutor, Whitgift, the licenser for the press, could soon arrange that such books or pamphlets should be stayed from printing or otherwise wiped out. Look how curiously defective some of Marlowe's plays are in their vestibule, the most important part for our purpose. Someone had

evidently been at work tearing out leaves and wiping out inconvenient evidence.

But enough of this. I claim to have furnished well authenticated evidence that many of Bacon's contemporaries knew the real author well enough, and gave pretty strong hints, though no one dared to name him, and that therefore the principal orthodox argument, viz., want of contemporary evidence, falls to pieces ;—and I turn to the allied question, Why don't critics accept this ?

Now, we know that Canon Henson holds that it is the duty of 'an official teacher of Christianity' to recognise in his teaching 'the well-authenticated results of historical criticism,' but it is a well-known fact that the bulk of the clergy of the Church of England positively refuse to recognise such results, even if some of them be as evident as 'two and two make four.'

Somewhat similarly, but on another platform, I hold that it is the duty of an official exponent or professor of English literature to recognise any well-authenticated results of literary criticism, as pointed out by myself or others in the Baconian problem.

I know what their scornful reply would be, —'What you may call "well authenticated" we call "utter rubbish"—the ravings of semi-lunatics.

It is not our duty, thank God, to notice or recognise such trash; and if it did come within our duty, it is so thoroughly repulsive a subject that we should find means to evade it somehow.'

Whether this state of mind in many critics comes from blindness, or perverseness, or prejudice, or all three combined, I know not; but I have some superior critics in my mind who have managed to combine the three perfectly without apparently being at all aware of it.

A lady once said to Archbishop Whately, when he was trying to explain the evidence for a certain matter,—'I don't understand it, your Grace, and I don't wish to understand it.' To which the Archbishop replied,—'Then, madam, I think you will succeed in not understanding it.' This suits the people who are unable to say 'Bacon' very well.

What is ultimately to be done with such people? I should almost be inclined to recommend the 'Jowett treatment,' if there were means of carrying it out. The great Master of Balliol had once a rather unpleasant rencontre with an undergraduate of his college who was 'unable to say' that God existed. This blatant young sceptic had the audacity to call upon Jowett personally, and officiously assailed him with his doubts.

Jowett listened placidly for a while, but soon finding that, like Messrs. Sidney Lee and Churton Collins, he had neither the *suaviter in modo* nor the *fortiter in re*, the Master, with well-preserved serenity, told him 'to find God within twenty-four hours,' or to pack his things and leave college. Fortunately, the blatant and abusive Shakespearians who deserve to be 'Jowetted' are very few in number, but in any case they are safe enough at present, for they belong to the majority.

I think very few people are able to realize the immense difficulty there is in overcoming a prejudiced view, whether it be of a literary or of a scientific character. Just for a moment consider and compare the so-called mesmeric and spiritualistic delusions and the so-called Baconian delusions. There are some striking similarities between them, although the opposition they met with proceeded in one case from men of science, and in the other from men of letters. The evidence on the side of mesmerism was of a very wide and remarkable character, but there was hardly a single man of science or doctor of medicine, except Elliotson, Braid, and Esdaile, who would listen to or act on the evidence for one moment. All serious attempts to gain the ear of qualified experts were flouted and met

with ridicule and vituperation, and this lasted for fifty years or more. Take the spiritualists. There were undoubtedly some cranks among them, and some impostors as well, and that is another point of similarity between the evidence for spiritualism and the evidence for the Bacon theory; for there are and have been many cranks among the Baconians, and perhaps some who were endeavouring, consciously or unconsciously, to mislead the public. And, again, the Bacon theory has sent one poor lady to an asylum—Delia Bacon, to wit—and perhaps others less known to fame, while the spiritualistic theory has sent scores and scores to the mad-house, both in our country and America.

And yet in spite of the prejudice and disbelief and vituperation, that lasted for quite fifty years, and was even stronger than the poor Baconians have had to put up with, now at last it is admitted that, with the exception of the cases of certain paid mediums and impostors, all, or nearly all, the immense amount of evidence offered to the public, and contumeliously rejected, was evidence both good and true and valid, and is now held to be fairly established by the best men of the new generation of scientists and physicians, who have in the progress of time come to occupy the position

and sit in the seat of the scorers who were before them.

‘The more striking phenomena of the induced trance and of automatism, such as suggestional anæsthesia, hallucination, catalepsy, involuntary speaking and writing, are now, it may be presumed, fairly established. But it must not be overlooked that it is only in the last generation—almost, it may be said, in the last decade—that these phenomena have come to be recognised as genuine accompaniments of a genuine if still obscure cerebral condition. . . . They have been recorded in bewildering variety, in innumerable treatises, and have yet failed until yesterday, not merely to secure a favourable verdict, but even to gain entrance to the Court of Science.’*

These are the words of a man who has studied the history and phenomena of spiritualism as carefully and thoroughly as any man living;—I mean, as far as the recorded evidences enabled him so to do. And I cannot but think that if the reading public would carefully weigh the evidence so far recorded for the Baconian theory, instead of scornfully rejecting it almost without a hearing, after the manner of the medical and scientific

* ‘Modern Spiritualism: A History and a Criticism,’ by Frank Podmore, 1902, vol. i., pp. xv, xvi.

big-wigs of a former generation with regard to mesmerism, etc., it might stand a chance, after a few score years, or perhaps less, of being 'fairly established' also.

I remember I was much struck, when quite a lad, with the strange fact that spiritualists as a rule remained spiritualists even after the most clear and positive detection of barefaced imposture shown up to them before their very eyes. I asked some friends, who were spiritualists, the reason, and the same answer was invariably given :—' No exposure of any medium can shatter my belief, for I have seen and heard things which I know to be supernatural.' If they had said 'supernormal,' they would have been possibly nearer the final truth ; but it was this *personal* knowledge of the strange 'facts' of the so-called spiritualism that made them such firm and unassailable converts, and was able to raise the number of professing spiritualists to a very large figure indeed both here and across the Atlantic.

And much as we may laugh at the vagaries of the rapping and table-turning humbugs of former days, we are obliged to say now that spiritualism, though mixed up with imposture and folly, was in a certain sense 'justified of her children' ; for the evidences which convinced so many faithful

spiritualists were often of a true and genuine character, although misunderstood and misinterpreted. We know now that trance-speaking, automatic writing, and telepathy are 'facts,' and we have no need to go to 'another world' to explain them.

Fortunately, the Baconian theory has never been complicated by mixing it up with the other world;—all our facts are mundane facts. We have therefore something more tangible to present than had the spiritualists, and, I would add, something much more antecedently credible.

The spiritualists had their charlatans and their cranks, and so have most movements, whether political, social, religious, or literary. The Baconians are not exceptions to this usual rule, but this no more damns their theory than the capture of some impostor and the exposure of his slate writing tricks damns the fact of automatic writing. Some Americans start a boom in Baconian ciphers, and it is shown to be fictitious rubbish, but that does not prove that there is no cipher at the head of 'Lucrece' or elsewhere. Ordinary people will not discriminate, and the expert and orthodox lecturers cannot be expected to do so. Who will cry stinking fish if he is a fishmonger?

But in spite of the drawback which cranks are

responsible for, more or less, in all novelties and restatements, there is this consolation for all inquirers who have enlisted, or intend to enlist, under the illustrious banner of Francis of Verulam—viz., *the man who enlists here, from inquiry and conviction, never deserts*. The Baconian community is a small one at present, but it is steadily increasing in a quiet and unobserved manner, as did, long ago, another 'pestilent sect everywhere spoken against.' 'Faithful unto death' is a Baconian truism, for no one, having once assumed our Franciscan habit (of thought), has ever yet been known to become a revert or pervert, but has lived and died in the faith. Why is this? Because there are certain Baconian 'facts' which, when once fairly estimated, cannot be 'got over' anyhow.

And so I say of 'Is it Shakespeare?' and other Baconian books, *Telle lege*.

CHAPTER III

NEW EVIDENCE—HALL'S SATIRES

‘Now hath not Labeo done wondrous well?’

THE new evidence I am going to bring forward in this chapter is both important and interesting. It is no less than a summary account of the literary life of young Francis Bacon up to about the year 1596. It was written, too, by one of the best critics of the time, before Bacon was forty years old.

This summary points to the plays of ‘Titus Andronicus,’ the contest between York and Lancaster, and possibly other historical plays of that time. It points to ‘Venus and Adonis,’ and to ‘Lucrece.’ It points to Bacon as being the author of one of the several elegies on Astrophel’s (Philip Sidney’s) death.

This summary of young Francis Bacon’s literary work seems to point out that the young poet began with pastorals. These may be lost, or

they may be Immerito's share in the 'Shepheards' Kalendar.'

The reader shall soon see the summary, with a few comments.

The amount of contemporary evidence and allusion that I have gathered together since my first attempt to settle the question, 'Is it Shakespeare?' has been so unexpectedly large that I am somewhat embarrassed as to which portions of evidence I shall first select.

But seeing that Hall and Marston proved so useful to me in affording clues to the Baconian labyrinth when I first entered it, and seeing that a more careful perusal of their satires has revealed other clues before unnoticed, I think therefore they deserve the same place of honour and credit which they had, and still hold (at least, in my opinion) untarnished, in my former work.

So we will begin with Joseph Hall, the celebrated and saintly Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, to whom, perhaps, I owe more thanks than to anyone else for the new light I have been able to throw on two of our greatest Englishmen—Bacon and Milton. It was through reading his 'Mundus Alter et Idem' that I was first induced to read carefully a rare and curious book in my library called 'Nova Solyma,' supposing it to be a moral

satire of a similar kind. I soon found out my mistake, and that a greater man than Bishop Hall, even his illustrious opponent, John Milton, was the author of that remarkable Puritan and Utopian romance became a profound conviction confirmed by every chapter I read. That conviction I still hold unshaken, and the discovery has been accepted by critics and experts recently. I have, therefore, weighty reason to thank this good Bishop for being the unconscious means of a Love's Labour on my part not altogether 'Lost.' Little did I think then that within a short year this same Bishop would reveal to my astonished and, at first, incredulous eyes the hidden features of the mysterious Domino of the earlier Elizabethan period. But it was even so, for it was through the Labeo of Bishop Hall's 'Virgidemiæ' that I came to the equally profound conviction that the author of the beautiful poems of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' was none other than Francis Bacon. I saw, too, at once the obvious inference that there was an excellent 'short method' to get rid of the wretchedly prolonged and much abused Bacon-Shakespeare controversy. For if Francis Bacon was the 'William Shakespeare' who signed the dedication of these poems to his known friend Southampton, and was their

true and sole author, there was then an end of the Stratford man's claim to these, and also to much more inimitable literary work.

I now recall Labeo to give fresh evidence. Labeo has puzzled the critics most amusingly. Dr. Grosart thought he was meant for Marston once, and then Chapman was supposed to be the man, and eventually both suggestions were abandoned; and he was wise at last, for Dr. Grosart's men had not a leg to stand upon. Mr. Singer thought it was Drayton, and Mr. Warton had previously declared for Chapman, and I dare say there were other names suggested which I have not seen; but the vast majority of critics took the wisest course and said nothing, although Labeo was the most prominent individual in Hall's book. The fact is they were all quite 'at sea.'

But Labeo undoubtedly stands for Bacon, and I will now proceed to give a contemporary summary of his earlier literary efforts, which are not to be found mentioned or referred to by Spedding.

If Hall's Labeo in the following passage is not the author of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' I shall be glad to hear who he possibly can be:—

'Tho' Labeo reaches right (who can deny?)

The true strains of heroic poesy;

For he can tell how fury reft his sense,
 And Phœbus filled him with intelligence.
 He can implore the heathen deities
 To guide his bold and busy enterprise ;
 Or filch whole pages at a clap for need
 From honest Petrarch, clad in English weed :
 While big *but oh's!* each stanza can begin,
 Whose trunk and tail sluttish and heartless been.
 He knows the grace of that new elegance,
 Which sweet Philisides fetch'd of late from France,
 That well beseem'd his high-styl'd Arcady,
 Tho' others mar it with much liberty.
 In epithets to join two words in one,
 Forsooth, for adjectives can't stand alone ;
 As a great poet could of Bacchus say,
 That he was *Semele-femori-gena*.
 Lastly he names the spirit of Astrophel.
 Now hath not Labeo done wondrous well ?

My commentary reads Bacon thus between the lines :—

‘Phœbus filled him’ :—Here we have the distich prefixed to ‘Venus and Adonis’ brought into court again.

✓ ‘mihi flavus *Apollo*
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua’

—i.e., Phœbus *Apollo* would fill his cup.

‘The heathen deities (who) guide his bold and busy enterprise,’—Possibly Venus and *Apollo* are meant.

‘Or filch . . . from honest Petrarch,’—every one did this. Petrarch was the model of all courtly poets.

‘While big *but oh’s*! each stanza can begin,’—In ‘Lucrece’ the very large proportion of thirty-two stanzas, each beginning with ‘but’ or ‘oh,’ is found. There are fifteen stanzas beginning with ‘but,’ and seventeen stanzas begin with ‘oh,’ and in two cases more ‘oh’s’ follow the first line.

‘Philisides,’—This was Sir Philip Sidney, who was virtually the first to use compound English words, in his ‘Arcady’ or ‘Arcadia.’ He fetched this style from France, and Bacon was the next man to adopt this *new elegance*.

‘Others mar it,’—*E.g.*, Nash and Harvey, who quite overdid the new style by barbarous exaggerations.

‘In epithets to join two words in one,
Forsooth, for adjectives can’t stand alone’:

This is a distinct feature of the great Shakespeare poems, and the beautiful double adjectives of ‘Venus and Adonis’ and ‘Lucrece’ help very much to heighten the charm of these metrical gems.

‘Lastly he names the spirit of Astrophel.
Now hath not Labeo done wondrous well’:

This Astrophel allusion is rather puzzling.

My impression is that Hall either thought or had private information that Francis Bacon was responsible for 'The Ruines of Time,' or else for the later 'Pastorall Elegie' entitled 'Astrophel.' In both the 'Spirit' of Sidney is specially addressed in frequently repeated praise and in passionate poetry. But I have considered this more fully when dealing with E. K. and Immerito.

But this is barely half the evidence bearing in the direction of Bacon, and the more remarkable and important is to come.

If we read on further, we shall see that Hall knew a great deal about Francis Bacon's earlier work, and puts it in somewhat chronological order.

There can hardly be more important new evidence than this, especially when we consider who gives it. Hall was one of the best literary critics of the time. He was well acquainted with members of the elder branch of the Bacon family, and afterwards travelled abroad with Edward Bacon. He would therefore be a most likely man to know about the concealed work of Francis. In fact, if my interpretation should hold good, we have on excellent authority, in the few next lines, a summary of Bacon's literary work up to about 1596.

This should be very important, for there is considerable 'concealment' about Bacon's early literary attempts, and many difficulties that need clearing up, and every little may help.

Having suggested that Labeo 'hath done wondrous well,' Hall proceeds to sketch his earlier attempts thus :

'But ere his Muse her weapon learn to wield,
Or dance a sober pirrhique in the field,
Or marching wade in blood up to the knees,
Her *arma virum* goes by two degrees.
The sheep-cote first hath been her nursery,
Where she hath worn her idle infancy,
And in high startups walk'd the pastur'd plains,
To tend her tasked herd that there remains.
And winded still a pipe of oat or breare
Striving for wages who the praise shall beare ;
As did whilere the homely Carmelite,
Following Virgil, and he Theocrite.'

In these important lines we have clearly allusion to Titus Andronicus marching through seas of blood, and to the contests of war of York and Lancaster, and other historical warlike plays of that period.

We have also a fairly distinct allusion to 'Lucrece' and to Bacon's magniloquent style generally.

Hall tells us plainly enough that Bacon began

with pastoral poetry. This may be lost, or may never have been published. I rather think, however, that Hall was referring to the 'Shepheards' Kalendar' of 1579, and to Immerito's share in it. But of that on some other occasion.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY EVIDENCE OF NASH AND GREENE (1587-1592)

THERE can hardly be more important evidence than that published by Greene and Nash in 'Menaphon' and their other writings, all dated some years before the world had heard anything about either a Shakspere or a Shakespeare. But this evidence has been rendered comparatively useless through the diverse interpretations it has received, and because no critic has been able to offer an explanation sufficiently satisfactory to hold the field against opposers.

Of course, as a heretic, my own view is that the orthodox critics could not help getting into a fog more or less thick, because they were all on the *qui vive* for evidence pointing to William Shakspeare, playwright and actor, while, as a matter of fact, at this early period he was in a most obscure position, and not likely to attract the

attention of Nash or Greene, or of any other contemporary writer whatever, much less to receive attacks from anybody in print.

But Greene and Nash did undoubtedly make a series of attacks for some years (1587-1592) on certain playwrights and actors, whom they do not expressly name, although they let fall several allusions which ought to enable us to discover them. I will restate the matter as lucidly as I can, but also with as much brevity as possible, because I may assume that on such a well-worn subject my interested readers know the chief points discussed.

About the year 1589, which is the date of our valuable asset 'Menaphon,' or perhaps a year or two earlier, there were some new plays and new playwrights rising into fame, and eclipsing the lustre of the established University pens, Greene, Peele, Marlowe, and others, who were the principal writers for the stage at that time. Robert Greene was perhaps the most prominent of these, for Nash tells us he wrote more than all the others, and he was the spokesman in print for the rest, though Nash wrote a pretty long address 'To the Gentleman Students of both Universities,' as a kind of preface to Greene's 'Menaphon,' and a witness to the grievances of its author.

The grievances were against *actors* as well as *playwrights*. The attack made was against certain 'vainglorious tragedians,' and also against 'their idiote art-masters that intrude themselves as the alcumists of eloquence.' It was these latter, who thought they could, as Nash says, 'outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of a bragging blank verse,' that formed the greatest grievance, for they, by supplying the actors with plays, were really taking the bread out of the mouths of Greene and the rest of the University pens then supplying the London stage. Moreover, they were plagiarists, and stuck like burrs to Greene, and took many shreds of wool from his fleece, according to his own account.

But what were the plays these 'alcumists of eloquence' supplied to the 'vainglorious tragedians'? Are any allusions given to help us to discover what plays are referred to? Yes, certainly, and they have not been sufficiently noted. Two famous plays are as good as 'named' in the following passage, where Nash complains that the actors on the stage,—

'contend not so seriously to excel in action as to indulge in vainglorious ranting wherein they proceed to embowell the cloudes in a speach of comparison; thinking themselves more than

initiated in poets' immortalitie if they but once get Boreas by the beard and the heavenly bull by the dew-lap.'

Now, who was it that went so far as 'to embowell the cloudes in a speach of comparison'? This is a sufficiently remarkable expression of itself, and I am surprised that no critic, as far as I have noticed, has attempted to explain it. The reference is to the anonymous author of 'Tamburlaine,' who in 'a speach of comparison,' properly so called, produces the odd simile:—

'As when a fiery exhalation
Wrapt in the bowls of a freezing cloud
Fighting for passage makes the welkin crack,
And casts a flash of lightning to the earth.'

1 *Tamburlaine*, IV. ii.

This allusion seems too clear to be contested. (Compare also '1 Henry IV.,' i., 27-35.)

Next, who was it that got 'Boreas by the beard'? Well, there is not much doubt about the source of this, and Mr. R. Simpson and others noticed it some years ago. What Nash was referring to occurs in the two following lines of the early play, 'The Taming of a Shrew,' first printed anonymously in 1594, but evidently written much earlier. The lines are:

'Whiter than are the snowy Apennines,
Or icy hair that grows on Boreas' chin.'

And, besides Nash, we have Robert Greene in 'Menaphon' itself referring to and parodying the same passage when he makes Roscius, who plays the wag as the shepherd Doron, remark,—'We had an ewe among our rams whose fleece was white as the hairs that grow on Father Boreas' chin.'

Here we get the actor who spoke the words as well, and it is probably Burbage; for though Roscius was a general term for a prominent actor, it was more closely connected with Burbage than any one else. This seems to be carrying us into Shakspeare's company, for without doubt he was a fellow-actor with Burbage for some years. But if we take Shakspeare to be the 'alcumist of eloquence' who was the anonymous author of 'The Taming of a Shrew' or of 'Tamburlaine,' we shall be entangled in an inextricable difficulty, for both these plays are of too early date and of too great originality and literary excellence to be his production.

At this early date (1589) Shakspeare was really a nonentity both as actor or playwright. Not even some years later (1592), when Nash is referring to Bentley and some other principal *actors* of the time, does he so much as mention Shakspeare's name; and it was as late as 1597

before anything was heard of him as a playwright, this year or the next marking his début on the title pages of certain quarto plays. So I repeat with some confidence that I do *not* think the Stratford man is in any way the object of the continuous attacks made by Greene and Nash so shortly after the Armada almost year by year.

There are certain other allusions to playwrights and actors, where ingrossers and trivial translators and actors travelling with their bundles are aimed at. Kyd is here certainly referred to, and possibly Munday and Alleyn, but there is not a word that can apply to the actor from Warwickshire. No, not even when Greene, in his dying legacy to his fellow-playwrights in 1592, utters his famous tirade against Johannes Factotum, the upstart crow, and the only Shakespeare in a country. But that shall be examined in the next chapter.

But if Shakspeare is conspicuous by his absence in these early allusions, is Francis Bacon, the genius of Gray's Inn, to be found there? That is naturally an important question for us heretics. I think he is there though he is not named. There is a semi-concealed reference to certain 'sweet gentlemen' of a higher social scale than had been previously criticised, and who are

spoken of civilly as if they were Mæcenases either in *esse* or *posse*, and this may account for 'biting' Nash not even showing his teeth, although both he and Greene were sufferers through them.

Nash's words are these:—

'Sundrie other sweet gentlemen have vaunted their pens in private devices and trickt up a companie of taffeta fooles with their feathers, whose beautie if our Poets had not peccte* with the supply of their periwigs, they might have antickt it untill this time up and downe the country with the King of Fairies and dinde [dined] everie daie at the pease porridge with Delphrigus.'

Now, have we not Francis Bacon here, and some of his play loving aristocratic friends? If ever there was a 'sweet gentleman' who was good at supplying literary matter and dumb-shows and 'private devices' for his lordly friends and patrons, or for his own 'Inne of Court,' then Francis Bacon was that man.

The date 1589 is early for him, but by no means too early; for he was getting on for thirty, and

* '*Peccte*.' All commentators took this to mean 'pecked' until Mr. R. Simpson said, 'Apparently it should be "decked."' But why not 'pieced'—*i.e.*, patched up? Cf. 'A Lover's Complaint,' 119.

had been ten years in town, with an immense amount of time (for he never wasted any) for these and other literary toys.

The grievance that made Nash and Greene so sore was not the 'private devices,' but the tricking up of a company of 'taffeta fooles' and inferior country tramping actors with feathers which were not their own—that is to say, supplying them with plays and fine phrases which had been partly 'conveyed' from the good old stock of the University poets and playwrights without so much as asking their leave. Greene was the greatest sufferer, possibly because he had written the most, and there is good contemporary evidence to show that he had a real grievance here, and did not complain of these 'sweet gentlemen' and the company of players they tricked out, and the damage such rivalry inflicted upon him, without strong personal reasons. If it be asked what company it was which contained these 'taffeta fooles,' I can only answer that the history and chronology of the various companies of actors about this time is in a most uncertain state. If, however, we may take the result of Mr. Fleay's laborious researches and of Mr. Hopkinson's equally thorough going study of the 'doubtful plays,' we arrive at their joint agreement that

Burbage and Shakspeare had broken away from the Queen's men (for whom Greene was the principal writer) before the year 1589, and had joined Pembroke's company, which shortly afterwards was merged into Lord Strange's company, which soon enjoyed almost a monopoly of the Court performances. So it is just possible that here we have the rise and progress of the 'taffeta foolies' that were so greatly helped by the 'sweet gentlemen' about town—those aristocratic 'good-fellows' and 'lively copesmates' of whom, in my opinion, Francis Bacon was by no means the least, either in genius or in literary activity, though he had not their wealth.

But, after all, the chief result I claim to have gained by this inquiry into the early allusions of Nash and Greene, is that Shakspeare at this period was of no reputation whatever, either as actor or writer. Nash and Greene despised the whole company, and did not hesitate to say so. The only reservation they made was in favour of one actor, a Roscius of 'deserved reputation,' who in their opinion saved the company. Now, this was clearly Burbage, and not Shakspeare.

But I will now come to the famous 'Shake-scene' allusion by Greene in his 'Groatsworth of Wit' (1592), and to another chapter.

CHAPTER V

SHAKE-SCENE SHOWN NOT TO BE SHAKSPERE THE ACTOR

IN this chapter I must ask a little forbearance, as I am going to make a suggestion which runs counter to the opinion of all students of the subject, whether orthodox or heretics, and contrary to my own view also till very recently.

To change one's opinion as the result of further investigation is, however, not a very heinous literary crime; on the contrary, it is often the mark of an open mind. It was brought about in my own case by a more thorough and careful consideration of the early evidence of Nash and Greene, which has been partly laid before the reader in the preceding chapter.

When we think of all the circumstances, and especially of these frequently repeated and very early envious references to 'alcumists of eloquence,' and to those who 'obtruded them-

selves as fountains of our finer phrases' (Nash's 'Anatomie of Absurditie,' printed 1589), can we suppose, I say, that Burbage's stable lad lately arrived from Stratford-on-Avon could be of such importance as thus early to attract the notice and continued criticism of two of the most noted of the University scholars then about town? We hear nothing of the Stratford man either as actor or writer for many years yet to come, for it was not he, but Shake-speare, with or without a hyphen, who was responsible for the two popular poems; and we hear nothing of him in connection with any plays till 1598, quite six years later.

However, the mountain has laboured enough, and shall produce the mouse at once. Here it is.

I suggest that the famous 'upstart crow,' the 'Tiger's heart wrapp'd in a player's hide,' the new bombaster and maker of blank verse, the 'Johannes Factotum and only Shake-scene in a country,' was not Shaxper of Stratford-on-Avon at all, but was William Shake-speare, the very same cultured and courtier poet who next year (1593) signed his name to 'Venus and Adonis,' and in the year after (1594)* was referred to as Shake-speare (with a hyphen), the depictor of Lucrece's Rape,

* In 'Willobie his Avisa.'

and a very different kind of man both in culture and position.

I shall presently give my reasons, but I hope it is thoroughly understood that I *suggest* it only : I neither swear nor affirm. In fact, I would not swear to anything in this controverted subject except that some orthodox critics* would do much better in the matter of fairness and courtesy if they *didn't do as they do do*.†

Indeed, the actor Shakspere hardly seems to come before the public at all until we hear of him taking a part in one of Ben Jonson's plays, and having his name, as we say, 'on the bills.' We get a note or two of his name in official documents as being one of Burbage's company, but if Mr. Payne Collier or Mr. Peter Cunningham have had anything to do with the production of

* Mr. J. Churton Collins, Judge Willis, and Father Thurston, S.J., ex. gr.

† My authority for 'do do' is this. When I was a boy, one of Lord Leicester's most respected tenant farmers, on the vast Holkham estate, was asked at an annual dinner to respond to a toast. He was not a born orator, but he did his best. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I have not much to say, but what I *do* say is, that if all landlords were to do as Lord Leicester do (*sic*) they wouldn't do as they do do.' He then sat down amid loud shouts of 'Well done, old Do-do!'

any of these proofs, they are rendered in the highest degree doubtful.

In fact, from the Stratford man's arrival in London about 1586 or so, with 'Venus and Adonis' in his pocket, having composed it as early, perhaps, as 1585 (which latter is Mr. J. Churton Collins' most ridiculous recent conjecture)* up to 1598, he is practically non-existent. We do not hear of his fame either as actor or playwright for the long period of quite a dozen years (1586-1598). It is true we hear of a great and very popular poet who signed himself William Shakespeare, and wrote two very elegant classical and aristocratic poems in 1593 and 1594, addressed to young Lord Southampton; but we claim to have shown that *they* did not proceed, and were not thought by contemporaries and critics to proceed, from the Stratford actor.† Indeed, the only oasis in this desert-like journey of twelve years or more is to be found, or is thought to be found, in the Shake-scene reference by Greene, the playwright.

Here all the critics, whatever other views they may hold, agree that we have reached firm ground

* Cf. 'Studies in Shakespeare,' by J. Churton Collins, 1904, p. 108.

† Cf. 'Is it Shakespeare?' *passim*.

and clear light amid the shifting sands and deceitful mirage of this long and desolate desert journey. This Shake-scene alluded to in 1592 was Will Shakspeare of Stratford, and no one else—so said and so say they all. Mr. Courthope, the last exponent of the Shakespeare plays, has insisted on this point as strongly as the whole body of his predecessors. His words are,—

‘We know for certain from Greene’s testimony that he [Shakspeare] had established a high reputation as a dramatist in 1592, and that he was a *Johannes Factotum* equal to taking in hand tragedy, comedy, or whatever kind of work was required.’

In fact, I believe that no one has ever ventured to dispute the assertion that Greene, when he spoke of this *Johannes Factotum*, this ‘only Shake-scene in a country,’ referred to the Stratford man obviously, from the very pun on his name. I confess I too have taken it for granted,—it seems so very obvious—and, indeed, I did not think twice about it, nor do I suppose that anyone else did. But I have thought twice lately, and my second thoughts have suggested to me that the world and his wife may be wrong after all. It was the hyphen in Shake-scene

which further helped me on what I believe to be the right road. Why, the Stratford man never had a 'Shake' in his name, nor yet his ancestors; and as to having a hyphen in the middle, all his people would have stared with amazement. They would not have been able either to recognise the thing or to name it. But there was a 'sweet gentleman' who had both a 'Shake' and a hyphen, and was a capital hand at bombasting out a blank-verse, too, and a Johnny Factotum with a vengeance; for he had taken all knowledge for his province, and was ready for every sort of poetry—at least, so Hall informs us, and he knew him well.*

So my second thoughts were that Greene, when he brought his 'Shake' and the hyphen into play, might well mean a certain 'sweet gentleman' who within two years' time (1594) had these both well in evidence in his own name in print in 'Willobie his Avisa,' where we are told plainly that Shake-speare was responsible for painting 'poore Lucrece rape.' But this great feat was far above Shakspere's art then or at any other time. However, I draw this inference, that if Shake-speare was known in print openly as the author of 'Lucrece'

* For this see 'Is it Shakespeare?' and also the new evidence from Hall in the present volume.

in 1594, he would be known also to be the author of 'Venus and Adonis' in 1533, and so we get very near (within a year) to Shake-speare being known to Greene as a promising writer; and if Greene knew that, we have his use of the nickname Shake-scene fully accounted for without any need to go to Burbage and ask him where his Factotum was that was going to 'shake' a country, or, at least, be the biggest man in it. Burbage *would* have stared!

Moreover, whoever studies the series of quotations from Greene's publications, where he shows his rancour against certain people who were taking away his professional profits and purloining from his plays as well, will see that this attack on Shake-scene in 1592 was no sudden thought, but that it was the crowning and pointed result of a long jealousy which had begun some time before, when Greene had found out there were certain concealed pens at work who dared to imitate and borrow from himself and others, and especially one, an 'upstart crow,' a veritable Johannes Factotum, who thought he was better able to place 'eternity' in the mouth of a player than the old regular practitioners.

But, as I have ventured to suggest a perfectly novel hypothesis, I must bring Greene's famous

passage again on the scene. I would, however, first notice that, if Shakspeare were meant, Greene ought to have said Shak-scene, for then he would be using the very spelling and pronunciation of the Warwickshire name, and his new-coined word, 'Shak-scene' would have been in strict analogy with similar compound English words. For Hall, his contemporary, writes

'Like a broad *shak-fork* with a slender steale,'*

where a pitchfork for shaking hay is meant.

We have also *Shak-bag*, a low character in a contemporary drama. But Greene did not write 'Shak-scene,' as he might have done, because he was aiming at Pallas Shake-speare, or Francis Bacon, the lawyer 'burr' who had been tearing the shreds of wool from his fleece.

But let us come to the famous crucial passage, and get through it as soon as we can, for it has been said that the public have been dosed with this till they are quite sick of it. I will try and vary the dose, or, at least, put another label on the bottle. A change of medicine sometimes works wonders.

Briefly, then, Greene just before his death, in

* 'Satires,' Book III., Satire vii.

a fit of repentance, left an address to certain 'Gentlemen his quondam acquaintances, that spend their wits in making playes.' He addresses them separately, and we find they were three, his 'fellowe Schollers about this Cittie'—Marlowe, Nash and Peele.

He warns them, among other things, to beware of a certain

'upstart Crow beautified with our Feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Player's hyde* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a Blanke-verse as the best of you [*i.e.*, you writers,—you University penmen], and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his owne conceyt the onely Shake-scene in a Countrey.'

Here, says everyone, is Shakspeare of Stratford without a doubt. I think now that there is a doubt, and that reconsideration is necessary. It has not been sufficiently noticed that Greene's letter was addressed to three *playwrights*, and that the fourth man mentioned was a *playwright* too. This is perfectly clear, for Shake-scene was a filler-out of blank-verse, and supplied the puppets or actors with his borrowed material. Thus, it appears that there was no hint that any one of the four who were alluded to was an *actor*.

Of course, the traditional Shakespearians will

say this is nonsense, because Chettle (who published Greene's address, and afterwards defended himself in print against two of the four who took offence at what Greene had said of them) gave a clear proof that one of the two that took offence was an actor, and that this one was Shake-scene, or Shakspeare, the actor.

But the old critics are wrong here also, for it is perfectly clear that Chettle does not refer to Shakspeare at all, and there is not a scrap of evidence that Shakspeare was one of the two that took offence. For these two that took offence are distinctly stated to be two of the 'divers play-makers' addressed by Greene; and Shake-scene was not addressed by Greene at all. The three addressed were Marlowe, Nash, and Peele, and it was two of these that took offence—Marlowe and Nash, I should say. Marlowe was the one that Chettle did not care to be ever acquainted with, and Nash the one he had heard well reported of for his 'facetious grace in writing,' and well spoken of by 'divers of worship.' In fact, Nash suits the remarks of Chettle, but Shakspeare does not.

One thing that makes for Nash rather than Shakspeare is the fact that Nash was about this time (1592) much brought into connection with 'men of worship,' who thought and spoke well of

him and favoured him. We have direct evidence of this from Nash's own lips, but there is no direct evidence of anything similar with regard to Shakspeare now that 'Lucrece' has lost its Warwickshire author.

Nash says in his 'Foure Letters Confuted' (1592): 'I can name divers good Gentlemen that have been my adherents and favourers a long time;' and he further adds they would stand up for him if attacked. One of his 'favourers' was the Earl of Southampton, whom he repeatedly refers to as such, and Southampton's set, which included Bacon, would certainly be favourable to him, and I contend it was this that Chettle knew and referred to. Nash, too, had been fighting on the side of the Bishops against the Martinists, and this gave him highly placed friends.

Chettle's expression, 'facetious grace in writing,' also applies well to Nash.* Yes, Nash had that quality in a greater measure than most of his coetaneans. Indeed, he was far too 'facetious' for most people with his Valentines and Dildos; but his gay young Mæcenæ overlooked it, and Francis Bacon was no precisian about this time.

* But the best point of all is that this 'facetious grace' was *in writing*, and Shakspeare as yet had written nothing at all.

Moreover, he had 'Venus and Adonis' either in his thoughts or memory just now. Nash also had helped in the Marprelate war on the same side as Bacon. So I feel somewhat justified in my suggestion, especially as it is clear that Shakspeare was not among the addressed playwrights that took 'offence,' and that Chettle does not refer to a man of such stamp as Shakspeare at all, for he lets us know that he is talking about 'schollers' pretty plainly a few lines previously.

His words are: 'How I have all the time of my conversing in printing hindered the bitter inveying against schollers it hath been very well knowne; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently proove.'

Chettle means here that he had toned down what Greene had said about Marlowe, and had not put a word in anywhere of his own, and that he was for sparing any invectives against Marlowe and Nash as being 'schollers.' How people for so many years have read the Stratford man who was no 'scholler' into this passage of the preface to 'Kind-hartes Dreame' I cannot conceive, except by supposing they took the current view without referring to the book, which was almost inaccessible. No contemporary ever held Shakspeare the player to be a 'scholler.' It is reserved for Mr. J.

Churton Collins to discover his wonderful knowledge of the Greek tragedians.

Add to this, Shakspeare was not a man to complain or take offence ; he had no 'railing wit,' as Davies of Hereford tells us, and Ben Jonson confirms this view. We know, too, how the play pirates and printers were unmolested by him.

But some critics may think that I have evaded or forgotten the remark of Chettle, that the man he is referring to is one 'exelent in the qualitie he professes,' and that therefore Chettle means Shakspeare the actor, and not Nash, because this word 'qualitie' is one most commonly used of the actor's profession.

I have not forgotten this point, which has, indeed, been supposed by most people to settle the question in favour of Shakspeare, but have purposely reserved it till now. I think it has been given more importance than it will bear.

1. If we look out 'qualitie' in the Oxford Dictionary, we shall find the word is by no means restricted to the actor's art, but will bear other references as well.

2. It is by no means clear that Nash was not an actor during parts of his career.

He certainly was connected with the stage, and got into great trouble (*circa* 1597) about the 'Isle

of Dogs,' a play which was severely proceeded against, and through which Nash was imprisoned for some time.

Now, there is the following memorandum in the registers of the Privy Council:—

'Uppon information given us of a lewd plaie that was plaied in one of the plaie houses on the Bancke side, contayninge very seditious and sclaunderous matter, wee caused some of the players to be apprehended and comytted to pryson, whereof one of them was not only an actor, but a maker of parte of the said plaie.' (Dated Greenwich, August 15, 1597.)*

This memorandum seems to apply to Nash more than anyone else we know of, and here we have him called 'an actor' as well as 'a maker' of plays. So in all ways Nash suits the remarks of Chettle better than Shakspeare, who, as already shown, was an unknown and unimportant man when Greene died. And, moreover, Nash was 'exelent in one qualitie' he professed, which was that of a biting satirist.

It has been suggested that this evidently opprobrious epithet Shake-scene was applied to the Stratford factotum because he was the *scene-*

* I have not verified this. My authority is mislaid.

shifter, and made himself generally useful as a supernumerary. If the word was really used in that sense, it would, of course, exclude Francis Bacon from Greene's indictment, but would hardly help the orthodox theory much; for it would then come to this, that William Shakspeare was a scene-shifter in 1592, and next year, 1593, addressed his 'Venus and Adonis' to young Lord Southampton, having either brought it to London in his pocket or composed it more recently in the intervals between shifting the scenes, and his other odd jobs. But surely the poem is too courtly, too classical, and too aristocratically conceived and worded, for a horny-handed scene-shifter.

I can only say that, if my suggestion is accepted or corroborated, it will help much to hasten Shakspeare's exit from the scene of his many triumphs. For if the Stratford genius has to retire from the Shake-scene allusion, and from any connection with the 'Sonnets' which bore Shake-speare's name so obtrusively on their title-page, if also he is obliged to give up any claim to be the William Shakespeare who thus signed the dedications of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' and showed both his head and tail in the latter famous poem—well, if this be so,

Shakspere will certainly have to make his EXIT from *this* stage, leaving the greater part of his literary baggage, stage properties, and dramatic creations behind him for their true possessor. He need not necessarily take his departure thoroughly stripped and unaccompanied. He will still, probably, be covered with many locks of wool and shreds which he could claim as his own, and some of his Stratford cronies might choose to accompany him as their lawful owner and creator—some local roisterers of Warwickshire and fat ale-wives of the Stratford neighbourhood—but most assuredly neither Hamlet, nor Lear, nor Biron, nor Romeo, nor Rosalind, nor Beatrice, nor Juliet, would follow at *his* heels as he turned to go.

Still, it cannot be supposed that he would make his exit without applause and honour. I feel sure that both the spectators and the puppets themselves in this imaginary exit would give the good old actor manager a hearty round of applause as he made his final bow. For they knew him to be an honest, capable man whose heart was in his work, who did his best for his company, and had honourably worked his way up from the lowest ranks of the profession, even as some other good fellows had, and was not a

‘railing wit,’ either. But it may be thought that though *Johannes Factotum* and *Shake-scene* might be made applicable to Francis Bacon, still, there is an ‘upstart crow’ to be reckoned with, and it will prove hard to bring in Bacon there. On the contrary, the term will suit Bacon very well ; as we proceed to show.

Most bibliophiles will doubtless remember that Gosson used the term ‘upstart new-fangled gentlemen’ on one of his title-pages. In fact, ‘upstart’ seems a word of reproach more applicable to a gentleman such as Bacon was, than to a base groom, or peasant, or vagrant actor such as was Will Shakspeare. But perhaps it will be objected that, although ‘upstart’ might pass in regard to Bacon, still, the word ‘crow’ is quite inappropriate to him. I do not think so, and for two reasons : (1) Crow was only a variation of Æsop’s jackdaw with borrowed feathers, and we have Ben Jonson calling Bacon Sir John Daw in the ‘*Silent Woman*,’ which corroborates my view. And although the Stratford actor did borrow a good deal from his old stock of plays, as Marston and Ben both hinted, yet he was not called a crow or a jackdaw. There is an alternative reason :—(2) Legal gentlemen shared with divines the exclusive use of black professional

robes. A legal 'crow' would be well understood.*

Again, in these early satirical remarks of Nash and Greene we have a frequent mention of 'burrs' who stuck to the playwrights and carried off the best passages of their works, just as a brier-brush or 'burrs' would rob silly sheep of the wool from their fleece if they came too close for the sake of protection.

Now, this word 'burrs' suggests *lawyers* rather than any other profession that the 'sweet gentleman' could belong to; for it was a well-known Elizabethan saying that lawyers were like 'burrs' or 'briers,' because they robbed their clients of their wool in the same way that the 'burrs' or 'brierbrush' robbed the unsuspecting sheep.†

I am quite aware that this Shake-scene allusion of Green in 1592 has been thought to be cor-

* The late Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple) did not, however, recognise this term for divines. A clergyman once asked his lordship if he might reside outside his parish, at a house which he stated was 'only two miles off the parish church *as the crow flies*.' Leave was tersely refused on the ground that the parson was not a crow.

† Cf. Hall's Sat. II. 3, *ad finem* for 'briars and lawyers'; also 'Palladis Tamia,' s.v., 'Lawyers,' for the same; also Phantasma's speech in the 'Return from Parnassus.' —3 Parn. 2183.

roborated by Gabriel Harvey in his contemporary remark: 'Vile Green, would thou wearest halfe so honest as the worst of the four whom thou upbraidest, or halfe so learned as the unlearnedst of the three.' This Harvey passage was taken in the early 'allusion-books' of Dr. Ingleby to mean 'half as honest as Shakspeare, or half as learned as Nash.'* But this fine Shaksperian proof had to be withdrawn in a later edition, for it soon became quite evident that the four referred to were the three brothers Harvey and their father, the ropemaker. So neither Shakspeare nor Nash were intended at all.

Nor is this by any means the only gross error in the early Shakspeare 'allusion-books' which had to be struck out afterwards. But I will not recount them, and will only say generally that the 400 or more Shakespeare allusions gathered by Ingleby and Furnivall—both shining lights among the orthodox—are of little use to prove their case, and are of much less force and value than the majority of the Baconian parallels which are so jeered at and despised. So this great piece of evidence from Harvey in favour of the early

* 'Shakspeare Allusion-books.' Published for the New Shakspeare Society, London, 1874, at p. xxiii of Introduction.

notice in 1592 of Shakspere the Shake - scene may be put in the waste paper basket along with many other early ones of note. In fact, 1591 or 1592 was far too early for 'Shakspur' to be written or talked about, although some of the Shake-speare plays had been written some years.

I know that my suggestion about Shake-scene is a paradox in the strictest sense of the word—that is, it is contrary to the expressed opinion of the vast majority of traditional experts, who will, as usual in such cases, either laugh it to scorn or else vilify it in some way. In fact, the whole Baconian theory is a paradox of the deepest dye, but it does not follow that therefore it cannot be true. Paradoxes much more aggravating than these have in our own generation asserted their correctness, and have prevailed. Let the orthodox Shakespearians, who laugh to scorn the paradox that Shakspere, the born genius of Stratford, *did not* write the immortal plays and poems, bear in mind the fate of other orthodox critics who for a much longer time laughed to scorn the paradox that Moses *did not* write the Book of Genesis.

Where are these orthodox Biblical critics now? Why, clearly, they are in that place to which the blind are said to lead the blind, and in this case a ditch from which no one can pull them out now,

whether by fair means or foul. Let the orthodox Shakespearians take a glance at the first polychrome edition of Genesis they may chance to meet; it ought to give them a fit of the blues or of the horrors before they have gone far into it. Only fancy what this polychrome text means:—Moses is turned out of possession after much more than 2,000 years' tenancy, and does not figure in the variegated text to the amount of a single line.

Poor Shakspar's case can never be so bad as that, it is true. How much of the polychrome Folio will be in Shakspeare's colour I cannot venture even to conjecture. Unless the next few generations of critics show considerably more unanimity of opinion than we have at present, this question will not be settled for a very long time. There will be other colours, too, in the future Folio. Fletcher, for instance, according to some of our best critics, must be represented; and since there was so much collaboration in plays in Elizabethan days, and since both Bacon and Shakspeare seem to have been quite ready to avail themselves of other people's feathers to adorn their own work, and possibly asked friendly playwrights to lend a helping hand occasionally in producing a play, it does not seem unlikely

that such playwrights as Munday, Dekker, Chettle, Hathaway, Drayton, and other writers who was willing to assist Bacon and the company, may have a claim to some passages in their own colour in the polychrome volume, but he would be a very daring critic who ventured to assign them. But these are details which do not really interfere with my main contention, which is that I hold that the two great Shakespeare poems will certainly be in a monochrome which is *not* that of the Stratford actor; and much of the immortal plays will be in the same colour, and perhaps all the sonnets. I know not what colour will be chosen for other portions, but the special tint of Gabriel Harvey's face might do very well; for we know from Nash that Harvey's complexion was very much like 'resty bacon.' However, it matters not much what colour be chosen for the B portion of the first polychrome edition; in any case it will be sure to comprise the greater part of the volume, and we shall have no chance of getting the beautifully variegated and almost kaleidoscopic arrangement of the up-to-date Genesis.

But we shall have to wait a long time, I fear, before the public or the press ask for such an edition. The orthodox critics have much more

dust to throw into the eyes of the public from their old traditional kitchen middens yet.

The Shakspeare worshippers and the Shakspeare societies will be sure to make strong rally round their idol before such a dreadful event would be allowed to happen. And then there are the vested interests ; they would resist very strongly.

The old editions, and, worse still, the many new editions, would go out of request, and the facsimiles would have to be relabelled, and many lives and lectures would be rendered almost useless. Pockets would be touched as well as reputations. Perhaps this accounts for the late constant volleys against the Baconians, of which we hear the reports in the newspapers and reviews. One fellow Baconian has suggested to me that these are the last upward flickers of a dying flame, but I am not nearly so sanguine as to think that.

CHAPTER VI

HARVEY'S EVIDENCE

IF any reader is inclined to ridicule my attempts to throw light on literary puzzles by fanciful dealing with proper names, such as Puntarvolo, Valentine, Sir John Daw, Ovid junior, and other supposed hidden references to Bacon (see the discussion of this in the appendix), they should remember how often a little attention to satirical nicknames has revealed the hidden character aimed at. And even when there is no satire and no intention to conceal, still, the want of due attention to proper names may keep up a literary mystery, when it is absolutely staring us in the face.

Lovers of Milton will remember how Mr. W. G. Clark of Trinity, Cambridge, found out in 1859 the Sphinxian remark about 'Rivers arise' in the poem 'At a Vacation Exercise.' No one could interpret this for over 200 years,

and then it was the *name allusion* that supplied the long-delayed solution.

So under the ægis of such a successful attempt as that of the Vice-Master of Trinity I will try if I cannot make Gabriel Harvey say Bacon under another name as well as Jonson (*vide* appendix). If I can do so with any acceptance I shall be proud of it, for Gabriel Harvey is so reticent about any connection with, or any reference to, Francis Bacon that one would imagine he did not know of his existence. And yet, according to my theory, he must have known Bacon in a very intimate and friendly way. Harvey is careful enough to keep Bacon out of his printed works, that is clear; but, fortunately, he was in the habit of annotating his books in their margins, and writing his name at least once or twice at the beginning or end.

I possess two of his books with his marginalia and his excellent calligraphy, but I could not find Bacon there.

It was in his fine copy of Quintilian, now in the British Museum, that I found, as I suspect, one notice of Bacon, and in a volume with Harvey's manuscript notes, sold last year (1904) at Sotheby's for £112, I found the other.

The references are both to a friend of Harvey's

whom he calls *Eutrapelus*, and he says of him in the Quintilian,—‘*Quicquid humanitùs acciderit, Eutrapelus semper megalander.*’ That is to say : ‘Whatever shall happen in the course of human events to Eutrapelus, he must always be considered a true *megalander*.’ Which was Harvey’s pet word for a man truly great in his opinion.

The other reference to Eutrapelus follows a manuscript paragraph about the connection between poetry and the drama, about ‘*Picta Poesis*,’ and living delineations, and almost without breaking off or leaving any gap we have the highest praise of Eutrapelus, apparently for his ability in the poetical drama.

My suggestion is that Eutrapelus was Harvey’s fictitious name for young Francis Bacon, whom Harvey had ample opportunity of knowing at Cambridge, when the Bacons were *in statu pupillari*, and likely students in rhetoric as well, and with whom he afterwards renewed acquaintance when young Francis came to England and joined the literary brotherhood of Sidney, Dyer, and others with whom Harvey was an authority and a frequent correspondent.

‘Eutrapel’ was the pseudonym of Noel du Faille, who wrote ‘*Baliverneries*’—*i.e.*, jest-books with facetious anecdotes intermingled—and as

Bacon, even in serious and mature age, could never pass a jest, and was always ready with an anecdote, and could unload a budget full faster than his scribes could write them down, I therefore conclude with some probability that Harvey gave young Francis that appropriate name of the French contemporary wit because of his early aptitude for those jokes and anecdotes in which he afterwards displayed such readiness.

Harvey recognised the youth as a true megalander *whatever should befall him*.

CHAPTER VII

CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE ; ALLUSIONS

IN no division of this controversy have the Baconians been so successful as in this matter of contemporary evidence. The orthodox argument used to be thus : 'The contemporary evidence of people who knew the author quite settles the matter against Bacon. There are hundreds of allusions all pointing to Shakespeare, and not a single one naming Bacon or even pointing to him.'

This would virtually settle the question, I admit, if the argument were true. Nearly everybody believes this to be true, and holding that belief they cannot be Baconians. But it is not true, and every year more inaccuracies are discovered in the details. The early allusions to Shakespeare which have been constantly repeated from one book to another, right away from the famous hundred allusions of Mr. Ingleby's 'Cen-

torie of Prayse' to the present year, will no longer hold good. They are not the allusions we really want in this difficult matter ; they are not allusions touching the crucial point of the controversy.

The earliest allusions are naturally the most important, and it can now be shown that these refer to a poet *Shake-speare* (the hyphen being used in several very early allusions). Nothing is said about his being an actor. Does not this strike one as strange, especially as we know the Stratford man went up to London to join a company of actors, and to *adopt their profession* ?

But the critics of the orthodox party have always been so sure of their man that this suspicious looking circumstance has never troubled them. Moreover, there was the early Shake-scene allusion, and as that was always supposed by both sides to refer to the Stratford actor, no one has ever alluded, as far as I know, to the absence of any reference to an actor in the earliest allusions to Shake-speare or Shakespeare, who, too, is never called Shakspere at this date.

I make bold to say that the earliest allusions before 1597-98 are all directed to a poet Shake-speare, whose name is spelled in the same un-

Stratfordian way as the signature to 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece.'

I further say there is no early hint whatever that this poet was an actor. In the much discussed passage of Greene in 1592 I hope I have already shown that he is there dealing with poets and playwrights such as Marlowe, Nash, Peele, and the new 'upstart crow' who was their competitor, imitator, and plagiarizer, but not an actor. The dying Greene looks with prophetic vision into the future, and sees a new rising universal genius, an upstart black robed lawyer burr and lawyer crow who would strip his fellow University men of the best shreds in their fleece, or, to change the metaphor, would pluck off from them their finest feathers of diction, and adorn himself with them, like the crow in *Æsop*.

Greene might well know from his London gossips what a *Johannes Factotum* the rising man was at masques, dumb shows, and Court interludes, that he was a 'sweet gentleman' for courtly verse as well as a youthful political adviser of the Queen, and concealed author of the greatest *Birth of Time*. He might readily have heard of his devices and his quaint conceits,—*Pallas* in her equipage of shield and shaking spear.

If a man of this description were not appropriately referred to by Greene as 'the greatest Shake-scene in a country,' I do not know another in the whole land to whom the phrase could so well apply. But in 1592 what had the actor done? He had not even set the Thames on fire; much less had he aspired for the position of the greatest Shake-scene in the whole country.

But there is 'the player's hide,' critics will say. You cannot get away from the actor in that sarcastic parody of Greene, where he changes the line of the early Shakespearian play of 'Henry VI.':

'O Tyger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide,'
into

'O Tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide.'

You cannot get away from the player or actor here. My reply is,—Possibly not; but this line quite fits in with the rest of my hypothesis. For Greene might well have an inkling that one or more actors were used by the lawyer 'crow' to hide his own personality, and so Greene made the allusive parody, meaning thereby that the upstart 'crow' and versatile pilferer from the University playwrights concealed himself under a player's hide, or stage robe, using that player as his mask

or instrument, and putting immortality in a player's mouth, as the attack phrased it. And so the Tiger-heart of the great factotum and Shake-scene hid itself under the garb of a common player, and put the immortality he claimed in a player's stage utterance. This immortality allusion was doubtless a sarcasm on Greene's part, but we know now that this same sarcasm is one of the 'eternal verities' of our English literature. The dramas then bombasted forth from the rude and limited stage of the Elizabethan playhouses are truly immortal.

Later on we get undoubted allusions to the actor from Stratford, but very few, the best being from the pen of John Davies of Hereford. He was undoubtedly amicably disposed to both Shakspeare and Burbage, and he mentions both with praise ; but it is not at all clear that he reckoned Shakspeare a poet, and in one of his short poems he speaks strongly against the indecent tone of 'Venus and Adonis,' and seems to hint at an aristocrat as the author rather than a player.

But, anyhow, the fact remains that none of the allusions combine the actor and poet playwright in a way that is absolutely clear and free from suspicion. This is shown more fully in my chapter on 'The True Shakspeare.'

But the most important point in this whole matter is that several of the formerly undoubted allusions to the Stratford man turn out now to belong to Bacon really.

I will give an instance;—Henry Chettle, in his ‘England’s Mourning Garment,’ written just after Elizabeth’s death, describes, in a dialogue between Thenot and Collin, the glories of the late Queen’s reign. Thenot says to Collin :

‘Resolve us . . . for thou hast heard the songs of that warlike Poet Philisides, good Melæbee, and smooth tongued Melicert, tell us what thou hast observed in their sawes, seene in thine owne experience, and heard of undoubted truths touching those accidents [of her reigne].’

‘Philisides’ is Philip Sidney, ‘Melæbee’ is Walsingham—praised under this name by Watson—and ‘Melicert’ is some writer, evidently of the same class and social standing, who also praised the Queen and was noted for a smooth tongue.

This is generally acknowledged as the true interpretation, but ‘Melicert’ is far less agreed upon as to his identification than the other two.

A few pages further on Chettle speaks in verse of those who had not celebrated by suitable funeral praises the dead Queen, and calls upon

them to do so without further delay. He mentions Samuel Daniel, William Warner, George Chapman, Michael Drayton, and some others, not by their names, but by allusions to their works which identify them without any doubt. He then mentions another who has failed to praise the dead Queen, and this one is that same Melicert who remained doubtful in the former allusion. His lines on him are :

‘ Nor doth the silver tongued Melicert,
Drop from his honied muse one single teare
To mourne her death that graced his desert,
And to his laies opened her Royall eare.
Shepheard remember our Elizabeth,
And sing her Rape, done by that Tarquin, Death.’

This has always been included among the Shakespeare allusions, because it clearly refers to the author of ‘The Rape of Lucrece.’ But I fear it must be taken away and put among the assets belonging to the Baconian heretics, for it is really an allusion to Bacon, not to Shakspeare of Stratford.

Sidney, Walsingham, and Shakspeare form a most incongruous trio as far as the last is concerned, especially for songs and ‘sawes,’ and the Melicert in the first quoted passage is clearly ‘a statesman or person of eminence,’ as Dr. Brinley

Nicholson suggested, and a 'smooth-tongued' politician as well; but when he put him down as intended for Burghley he made a very bad conjecture, assuredly.

Bacon is the man designated by Melicert, and the only man who fits all the circumstances of Chettle's 'England's Mourning Garment.' I think any unprejudiced inquirer will admit this. Here then we have a strong, as supposed, Shakspearian orthodox allusion turned into a still stronger Baconian one. And this holds good with all the early allusions if they are thoughtfully examined. Here is one of the prime Shakspearian orthodox arguments with the very ground cut from under its feet, and placed as a stepping-stone for Baconians to approach the real Shakespeare—the honey tongued favourite of the Court gallants' study and the lady's boudoir.

Again, the way in which Shakespeare's dramatic fame was first openly discovered to the world of literature is very suggestive. Not till about 1598 do we hear a word about Shakespeare as having written a play of any kind, either tragedy or comedy. Then all at once we receive a good long list of plays, published and unpublished, comedies and tragedies, attributed to Shakespeare as 'the most excellent in both kinds for the stage.'

But who volunteered this information? That is an important question, and the answer should make orthodox Shakespearians pause and think. I will give the answer in the very words of Mrs. Stopes, a well-known disbeliever in the Bacon theory. She says,—*

‘Shakspeare’s fame became fixed in 1598 by the liberal praise of Francis Meres, Professor of Rhetoric at Oxford, brother-in-law of Florio, the philological protégé of the Earl of Southampton.’

Now, seeing that Bacon wrote an admirable sonnet to Florio, who was a friend of his, in 1591, and seeing that Florio, referring to this same sonnet seven years later, in 1598, said that its author (Bacon) was ‘a gentleman, a friend of mine that loved better to be a Poet than to be counted so,’ and seeing, in addition to these, that Meres was a relative of Florio’s and living in London in close contact with him, is it not highly probable, knowing what we do now, that Meres would hide the true name of the modest and retiring poet friend of Florio under any mystification that came most readily to hand, rather than break through the veil of secrecy which their mutual friend had used already, and

* ‘Shakespeare’s Sonnets; with Introduction and Notes,’ by C. C. Stopes, p. xl (1904).

clearly wished to retain? As Meres would not violate secrecy by naming Bacon, he took the readiest mystification there was, and that was the name Shakespeare—the very same one that he and Florio and Southampton must have known had been used by the same retiring poet twice in some beautiful poems a few years before, addressed to Southampton himself. Bacon did not wish his name to be known as a poet or dramatist, but something must be done in the matter, for the plays and their success were becoming subjects of common knowledge by 1598. It was needful to attribute them to someone, so as to stop curious questioning tongues, and so the old mystification Shakespeare did service again. It would not mystify the few friends of Bacon and Southampton who really knew, but it would mystify the general public who were not behind the scenes, and by a coincidence of name with a rising and pushing actor manager it would admirably serve its purpose of concealment. The misnomer ‘caught on,’ as we say nowadays, and, strangely enough, it has ‘held on’ right up to our generation. This is my explanation of the famous Shakespeare criticisms in Meres’ ‘Palladis Tamia,’ which, be it remembered, was one of the Bodenham series, and who Bodenham was I have

tried to show in the previous volume. I do not expect orthodox critics will accept it, or term it any else than 'plausible' or 'fanciful,' but I submit it for what it is worth, and for my assertion that Bacon wrote the sonnet to Florio I refer my readers to 'Is it Shakespeare?' p. 182 *et seq.*

The second laudatory poem before R. Greene's 'Menaphon' shows pretty clearly that it was not Shakspeare the player that Greene and Nash were aiming at in 1589 and 1592. The poem says that they were 'witts' who were aimed at, or the talented 'sweet gentlemen' who were vaunting the 'pompe of speach' in their 'drumming descant,' and who strove 'to thunder from a stageman's throat.' Therefore, plainly, these 'witts' were not stagemen themselves, and therefore Shakspeare is excluded, as we may well imagine he would be at this period (1589).

This is what Thomas Brabine, Gent., says in praise of Greene's 'Menaphon':

'Come forth you witts that vaunt the pompe of speach
And strive to thunder from a stageman's throat;
View "Menaphon" a note beyond your reach,
Whose sight will make a drumming descant doat.
Players avaunt! you know not to delight;
Welcome sweet shepherd, worth a scholar's sight.'

This prefatory poem distinguishes between the

playwrights (the 'witts') and the actors ('players avaut!') just as Greene does here and elsewhere. Certainly, if we look at the characters portrayed in 'Menaphon,' we shall find that Doron and Melicert might well stand for two 'witts' who 'vaunt the pompe of speach,' and might well be two 'sweet gentlemen who had vaunted their pens in private devices.' In which case Melicert would be Bacon, and this identification agrees with all the other reference to Melicert in Elizabethan literature. Melicert was a courtly personage, that seems quite clear, and the general result of Greene's Sphinxian tales of the period 1589-1592 comes to this, that Shakspeare the actor is everywhere excluded, while Bacon the courtier, 'sweet gentleman,' and planner of devices and impresario of a motley company of players, is constantly in evidence under Greene's reticent allusions.

And now, having brought to a conclusion my early Shake-scene and Shake-speare evidence, and discussed what notices could be found of the doubtful plays, I will ask leave to hazard a general conjecture on this obscure period.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE FOR BACON

MY next contemporary evidence is from 'Histriomastix.' I cannot help thinking that ornamental woodcut headings may possibly form part of Bacon's plan of ear marking his writings—for he certainly had a way of leaving his mark on his productions, as I contend I have shown.

I would not call anyone irrational who considered there was some hidden import in the very funny hatted owl which appears in several publications connected with Bacon, Shakespeare, Nash, and Essex. The owl was the sacred bird of Pallas, and I well remember an engraved frontispiece of a Baconian work where two owls are depicted in the bottom corners holding torches. But I was more struck by some singular allusions to owls and owlets in the play of 'Histriomastix,' in which that sharp-eyed satirist Marston seems to have had a share, if, indeed, the whole play be

not his. As its name shows, it is a scourging satire on stage players generally, and some 'translating scholler' in particular, and has a great deal to say about a certain 'Maister Posthast, the poet,' whom I take to be Anthony Munday, a friend of Francis Bacon to a greater extent than has been hitherto supposed. Also the play refers to certain Lords Mavortius and Philarchus, who send for the players to perform whenever they want them.

These Lords might well be Southampton and Essex, and the players Shakespeare's company; for one of the actors says, 'Here's a Gentleman scholar writes for us,' and then Posthast adds the very odd declaration, 'I am desperate of a horse,' which recalls 'My kingdom for a horse,' and was one of Marston's Baconian allusions also.

But my main point is about owlets, and the allusion comes in early in the first act. One of the players asks: 'But whose men are we all this while?' Posthast (*i.e.*, Munday) answers: 'Whose but the merry Knights, Sir Oliver Owlets? There was never a better man to Players.'

What if Munday is referring here to Bacon? But Bacon was not knighted yet; he had to wait for that till King James came.

True! but he was a merry Knight of the Helmet, and Munday and Marston knew that well enough, and perhaps Lynceus of the Satires had seen the 'Owle in the Ivybush,' of which we hear in Scene ii., for a ballad-singer enters and says in a series of questions,—

'What's your playes name? Maisters, whose men are ye?

'How, the signe of the Owle i' th' Ivybush? Sir Oliver Owlets?'

And is answered by a player: 'Tis a sign ye are not blind, sir.'

Presently the players with Posthast, the poet, come to the great hall of Lord Mavortius, and the usher says:

'Sir Oliver Owlets men welcome. By God's will
It is my Lords pleasure it should be so.'

Afterwards part of a play, 'Troilus and Cressida,' is performed, and in Act VI., when the poor players cannot pay their tavern bill, and a constable is called in, the following curious conversation ensues:—

'BELCHER (*a player*). Why, Constable, do you know what you see?

'CONST. Aye, I see a Madge-howlet, and she sees not me.

‘POSTHAST. Know you our credit with Sir Oliver?’

‘CONST. True, but your boasting hath cracked it, I fear.’

‘Histriomastix’ is worth reading as a curiosity; as for Sir Oliver Owlet, I leave him to better eyes than mine, but by a good searchlight I think the gloom of the ivy-bush would be dispelled.

I feel sure that some will think that the idea of Francis Bacon having a company of players, after the manner of the great noblemen of the land, is most ridiculous. But, as they may read in the ‘Memoirs of Edward Alleyn’ (p. 5),—‘Even knights had their dependent players, and as early as 1553 we hear of those of Sir Francis Leek, and in 1571 of those of Sir Rob. Lane.’

Moreover, it is not suggested that Francis Bacon ‘ran’ this company alone. There were ‘grand possessors’ and promoters who, no doubt, helped financially. Indeed, the liberality of Essex and Southampton to Bacon, of which we hear on good authority, points somewhat in this direction.

Concerning Posthast there is, I hold, very little room for doubt. The sobriquet points out the man aimed at clearly enough. Anthony Munday was a Queen’s Messenger, and such a one of all men should, when on duty, execute his affairs

with post-haste. But the name is by no means the only proof. Posthast, like Anthony Munday, is said in 'Histriomastix' to be a poet, who began as a ballad-writer, and when his trade as a dramatist fails he says he will write ballads again,—

‘Faith, I’ll e’en paste all my ballads together.’

Histriomastix, Act V., 91.

And Galch, one of the players in this comedy, says of Posthast’s extemporizing,—

‘Well, fellows, I never heard happier stuff.

Here’s no new luxury or blandishment,

But plenty of old Englands mothers words.’

Histriomastix, Act II., 127.

Which suits well enough what we know of Munday from his acknowledged writings.

Now, if Munday was the poet for Shakspeare’s company, as ‘Histriomastix’ seems to show us, we get a strong light thrown upon some early notices of the Elizabethan drama which no critic so far has satisfactorily explained. For as early as 1589 we have Nash telling us of some ‘sweet gentlemen,’ who had been in the habit of supplying ‘devices’ (*i.e.*, masques, plays, and interludes) for private patrons, now taking upon themselves

to trick up a company of taffety fools with their feathers. In plainer language, certain well bred gentlemen had demeaned themselves so far as to descend from providing private entertainment for a select company as to write plays for a vagrant company of bedizened and ignorant actors, mere taffety fools. In this way the profession of such University scholars as Greene, Peele, and the rest, had been damaged, their fresh services dispensed with, and their old plays used, revised, and appropriated without so much as 'by your leave.' This is the grievance that Nash and Greene refer to again and again in 1589 and in 1592, and on other occasions.

Now, the question is, Who supplied these taffety fools with their immortal words? Who were the sweet gentlemen who placed immortality in the words that breathed from a mere player's mouth? That indeed is the secret we all want to know. Well, is it not partly revealed in such passages as we have been considering? What sweet gentleman was more likely to 'trick up' the actors with what they required than Francis Bacon, who might very well be helped by Essex or some Gray's Inn friend, or more than one Anthony; for we are told that Anthony Bacon was an equally good wit, but was not so learned

as his brother.* And there was another Anthony, Posthast Munday, to help in the plots, a most suitable man, too, for according to Francis Meres, who in 1598 told us so much about the immortal plays, Munday was 'our best plotter,' and he was a translator as well, even as Kyd was.

After Greene's death the plays continued to be written and produced anonymously until about 1597 and 1598, and we really hear nothing from contemporaries about Shakspeare the playwright till 'Love's Labour's Lost' appeared in 1597, with his name on the title-page as the reviser. This seems to me to be the first entrance of 'Shakspeare' on the scene of the immortal plays, and that the Stratford man's name should first appear in connection with such an original work of aristocratic genius as was the comedy of 'Love's Labour's Lost' would be enough, one would think, to rouse the suspicion of every competent critic in the town; and it is just because the Shakespearians *assume* that all his contemporaries accepted Shakspeare as the author without any demur, and take it *for a settled fact* that no doubts were ever raised adverse to the Stratford man's claim—it is mainly through this that the

* He was not in England, but might have sent lyrics, etc., as A. B. was good at these.

Baconian theory can find no place in so many reasonable minds. The Shakespearian argument, with this assumption granted, is absolutely convincing. If Shakspeare's name appeared as reviser or author on play after play and in year after year, and if his contemporaries who knew him accepted his authorship without either doubt or objection, what possible right have we, after this lapse of time, to try and make the critics and ordinary mortals of those days all blind and wrong? Is it not far more likely that the Baconians are blind and wrong? This is apparently a very forcible argument, and has kept thousands of sensible men firm in the traditional belief, and with their faces fixed as a flint against the Baconian lunatics. But, forcible as it seems, it cannot stand. It is not an argument at all; it is an assumption, and a wrong assumption, too.

This, among other things, is what I claim to have shown beyond contradiction in my former and present books. I claim to have proved that some of the keenest and best literary critics of the time did not accept the Stratford man as the author of either the poems at all or of the plays entirely. I claim to have shown that Hall, Marston, and Ben Jonson were well acquainted with the fact that Francis Bacon, and not Will

Shakspeare, was responsible for the poems and much of the plays passing under the name of Shakespeare. And I claim to have produced, in addition to this, a good *primâ facie* case that many other notabilities and writers of that age knew who the real, but concealed, author was, but for various reasons refrained from divulging or publishing the true facts of the case. What these various reasons were we are not likely to find out with any certainty at this distance of time, but we may hold it probable that among them were such reasons as I have ventured to give here and there when the difficulty occurred. I also believe Bacon had many contemporaries who admired the genius and undeniably great qualities he possessed, and many friends as well, such as Camden, Selden, Lancelot Andrewes, and others; I think all these would keep a Pythagorean silence, if they thought Bacon wished it or the circumstances demanded it.

CHAPTER IX

CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE FOR BACON (*continued*)

MY next contemporary evidence for Bacon will be taken from those enigmatical personages known as 'Aetion' and 'pleasant Willy,' who are mentioned in 'Colin Clout's come Home again' and in 'The Teares of the Muses,' both composed before 1591. It has been supposed again and again by critics that here we have two of the very earliest allusions to the Stratford genius, or, in any case, if not Shakspeare it was Drayton, but no one for a moment suggested Francis Bacon. However, I think he should claim a hearing here as well as elsewhere.

The controversies about the personage alluded to as 'Aetion' have been persistent, inconclusive, and sometimes rather ridiculous. The word 'Aetion' has been supposed to mean Eaglet, and a Greek diminutive not known to the lexicographers has apparently been invented to meet the present case. Then we have its derivation and meaning

deduced from *ἄττια*, which is said to be equivalent to Daniel's Idea, and then Drayton has been brought in because he sometimes took the name Rowland, which may be said to 'heroically sound.'

But why go beyond the man of Greece who bore the name in question, and is referred to by Lucian (at some length), Cicero, and others? He was a famous painter, and the picture best known was his 'Marriage of Alexander and Roxana.' He is also reported, under the name of Echion, to have depicted 'Tragedy and Comedy' (Echion being a corrupt form of Aetion, as some have said).

If any Elizabethan took interest in Alexander the Great and his history, I should think it would be Bacon above all others; also in Tragedy and Comedy, which to him were both of one alphabet and were speaking pictures.

And if any name was heroically sounding, it was that of Shake-speare, a name, I believe, adopted by Francis Bacon somewhat earlier than Greene's allusion of 1592.

There is an additional reason for taking Aetion as a personal name derived from classic times, for many other names such as Corydon, Amyntas, Alcon, Palin, etc., are of this nature.

As to 'our pleasant Willy' being Tarleton the

jester, Mr. Lee, while trying to show this, showed rather his inability to understand plain English. It is not Tarleton, but Bacon, who is referred to in those important lines in the 'The Teares of the Muses.'

Since this, if correct, is a very weighty and early allusion, being anterior even to the famous 'Shake-scene' quotation, I must quote the whole passage, especially as I here again run counter to the opinions of all the experts.

The literary history of the allusion is briefly this. In 1591, the year before that in which we first heard of the 'upstart crow,' there was published by Ponsonby, who had recently (1590) issued the first instalment of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene,' a volume of 'Complaints, containing Sundry Small Poems of the World's Vanity,' wherein were expressed many lamentations concerning the contemporary retrograde movement in poetry and the drama. 'The Ruins of Time' and 'The Teares of the Muses' were the two poems which chiefly dealt with this theme of complaint. The nine Muses each shed their tears in a short poem of ten stanzas, and it was Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, who made the reference, as I take it, to Bacon. It is historically certain that poets and playwrights and actors were just at

this period under a cloud. Burghley, though a great administrator, was very parsimonious in his support of literature and art, and had apparently a natural aversion to the fancies of poets, and the Puritans, especially of the City of London, were successfully pushing forward their almost fanatical opposition to the drama and the theatres. So Thalia begins thus,—

‘ Where be the sweete delights of learning’s treasure,
That wont with Comick sock to beautifie
The painted theaters, and fill with pleasure
The listners eyes and eares with melodie?
In which I late was wont to raine as Queene,
And maske in mirth with graces well beseene?’

After relating in the three next stanzas how Ignorance and Barbarism had lately altered all these for the worse, Thalia goes on to say,—

‘ All these and all that else the Comick Stage
With seasoned wit and goodly pleasance graced,
By which mans life in his likest image
Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;
And those sweet wits, which wont the like to frame,
Are now despizd and made a laughing game.

‘ And he whom Nature’s self had made
To mock her selfe and truth to imitate,
With kindly counter under Mimick shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late;
With whom all joy and jolly merriment
Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

‘ In stead thereof scoffing Scurrilitie
And scorning Follie with Contempt is crept
Rolling in rhymes of shamelesse ribaudry
Without regard or due Decorum kept
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the Learned’s taske upon him take.

‘ But that same gentle Spirit, from whose pen
Large streames of honnie and sweete nectar flowe,*
Scorning the boldnesse of such base-born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throwe,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle Cell,
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.’

Now, who was ‘our pleasant Willy’? Who was ‘that same gentle Spirit’ who had a pen flowing with honey and nectar? Dryden was one of the earliest to attempt to answer this important literary question, and he thought that the passage could refer to no one but Shakespeare, meaning, of course, the actor of Stratford. This was taken for granted for some time, but it was noticed that Willy was described as ‘dead of late’ in 1591, so that answer could not possibly stand. It was suggested by a seventeenth-century commentator that the famous comedian Tarleton, who had died a few years before the lines were written, was the man meant, and

* Here is ‘sweet Mr. Shakespeare’ again.

Mr. Sidney Lee endorsed that view in his 'Life of Shakespeare.'

Dean Church, in his excellent monograph on Spenser, thinks that Philip Sidney and his masking performances was here alluded to. So we have Shakespeare the actor, Tarleton the comedian, and Sidney the courtier to choose from.

Mr. Sidney Lee says 'there is no reason to dispute the view' that Willy means Tarleton, and adds,—'Similarly, the "gentle spirit" who is described by Spenser in a later stanza as sitting "in idle cell" . . . cannot be reasonably identified with Shakespeare.' Here he makes Spenser refer to *two* personages, and misquotes or leaves out the adjective 'same' before 'gentle spirit,' which adjective shows that Spenser is still referring to Willy. In fact, Mr. Lee has badly blundered over the Spenserian allusions, both here and with Aetion.

I hold that not one of the three answers satisfies the conditions of the questions anything like so well as the answer I propose now to give.

Shakspeare of Stratford is excluded without a chance of appeal on account of the date. In 1590 he was a thoroughly unimportant personage, of whom no mention had been made by anyone, and for Spenser to call *him* 'our pleasant Willy,' and

then to say he was 'dead of late,' is ridiculous. And it was not much less absurd to speak of the Stratford stable-boy as one who would

'rather choose to sit in idle Cell,
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.'

Was Will Shakspeare a man to sit and cogitate in an idle cell or study? Was he one to refuse to sell anything, whether it brought 'mockerie' or not, so long as it brought a profit to himself? Neither Tarleton nor Sidney was a writer of comedy or a votary of the Muse Thalia, in the strict sense of the word; nor was the name of either Willy, although I know it may fairly be said that Willy was a general name of familiarity, and appears with Colin and Cuddie and other such friendly abbreviations in pastoral poesy, and especially in the 'Shepherds' Calendar.'

But the man I suggest—viz., Francis Bacon—is not excluded in any of these ways. The early date of 1590 certainly does not exclude him, for I have no doubt that the talented youth of eighteen brought back from France several pieces of good literary work in 1579, and comedies, too, partly sketched and ready for revision, and he had ten years to revise and compose others between 1579 and 1590. If we read and properly interpret the

letters of Harvey and Immerito in 1580 and a little earlier, we shall not find it difficult to believe that Francis Bacon, in the decade 1580-1590, brought out several pleasing and 'decorous' comedies, whether at Gray's Inn or before the Court circles, or perhaps now and then at the Bull or elsewhere, which, after further revision and amplification, had their final literary issue among the immortal dramas of the First Folio.

There are floating traditions and notices of plays which may well have developed later on into 'the Jew that Shakespeare drew' in 'The Merchant of Venice,' and into the wonderful Fairy Court of Oberon and Titania. And, besides these, there are the *prima stamina* of the great chronicle plays, some of which first sketches may well have been written before the poet made Thalia weep; but these would be out of her province.

Again, to Spenser he was 'pleasant Willy.' But who so soon afterwards signed 'Venus and Adonis' as William Shakespeare? And who said in the sonnets, 'My name is Will'? But if I ask the orthodox such questions they seem deaf.

Look, too, again at Thalia's fine account of what true pleasing and decorous comedy should be. Read the stanzas again, and see what it was that

made Willy 'choose to sit in idle cell' and give up writing his comedies for a time. He was disgusted with the low ebb the drama had reached by reason of 'scoffing Scurrilitie and scorning Follie,'—

'Rolling in rhymes of shamelesse ribaudry
Without regard or due Decorum kept.'

Now, this would apply well to Francis Bacon, who certainly was for elevating the drama and making it a vehicle of his views and plans for the public good. If Bacon printed or revised plays, he would exclude the vile 'clownage' as far as possible, and would not sell himself to 'mockerie,' certainly; for he had a most high opinion of decorum in all things, and, as far as we know about his earlier years in London, would much rather 'sit in his studie' like Faustus, or in 'his idle cell' at Gray's Inn indulge his genius in 'concealed' works of recreation, than subject his name and fame to common envy.

But some critic will be sure to say that my suggestion is 'plausible' enough, but utterly 'in the air,' and 'will fall down with a mere touch like a house of cards.' This is the way of the pretty Fannys of the press, and I know it well. If I did not anticipate them, they would all come down like a wolf on the fold with a hungry yelp-

ing chorus of 'To Earlswood with him! It's a clear case without a doctor's certificate. Why, this Willy was *dead* in 1590, and Bacon was alive till 1626. How could Willy be Bacon?'

Well, if they put me away for that, they must send Dean Church to keep me company, for that accomplished divine and elegant Spenserian scholar says that, as far as Willy is concerned,—

'the lines imply, not that he is literally dead, but that he is in retirement. The expression that he is "dead of late" is explained in four lines below as "choosing to sit in idle Cell," and is one of Spenser's common figures for inactivity or sorrow.'*

Also Rowe in 1709 held a similar view that *dead* meant only retirement, but, curiously enough, did not refer to the proof so evidently there.

So the result of the careful examination of this important and very early allusion is that it cannot allude to Sidney, as some Shakespearians try to make out, nor yet to Tarleton, for both of these were not merely 'dead of late,' but were dead altogether; and to suppose that these 'same' two, or either of them, could be sitting years after in an idle cell, and meditating with closed doors, we must also assume that they had risen

* 'Spenser,' by R. W. Church, London, 1902, p. 107.

from the dead. But miracles cannot be admitted into this purely literary question ; and since Bacon was alive, and suits the case better than anyone else, we accept this allusion of Spenser as a useful piece of biography to fill up an empty space in Bacon's life.

And even though Bacon's name was Francis, and Shakespeare's William, there are good reasons for taking Bacon to be 'Willy,' rather than Shaksur of Stratford ; and the man who says to himself, 'Willy Bacon is ridiculous,' is, I fear, not acquainted with the hidden peculiarities of this Elizabethan question.

Believers in the Swan of Avon have always thought that their strongest argument was the fact that all Shakspeare's contemporaries acknowledged *him* to be the author of the works passing under his name, and there was absolutely no hint or reference concerning Bacon for nearly 250 years. This was their *terra firma*, and when on this ground they have always felt themselves invincible and secure.

The truth is, this was really a very sandy foundation, and if they do not speedily decamp, the moving quicksand will swallow them up, and their

pretensions with them. The new evidence of Hall, Marston, and others, which I adduced in 'Is it Shakespeare?' still remains uncontradicted, and I have seen no reasons to qualify or retract it, and have now been able to corroborate it and to add several other pieces of contemporary evidence to show that the Baconian authorship was well known in certain circles, but was not openly divulged.

My first additional witness is found in an early piece of contemporary evidence for Bacon—as early, indeed, as 1593-1595.

It is from Thomas Edwards, who wrote 'Cephalus and Procris,' and had it licensed for the press in October, 1593. The only copy extant is dated 1595. This has at the end another poem by the same author, called 'Narcissus,' which is also dated 1595.

In this latter poem we have references to many contemporary poets, and among them the very earliest notice of Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander,' with several quotations from it. Thomas Edwards must have seen a copy, either in manuscript or printed, very shortly after Marlowe's death; and seeing that our earliest copy of 'Hero and Leander' is dated 1598, or five years after the author's death, this is a fact of interest, which

I am surprised to find quite unnoticed in all the editions of Marlowe that I have seen.

But 'Narcissus' tells us things of far greater import than this; for we are introduced to 'Adonis' not long after the latter had been first published. In the last part of 'Narcissus,' called 'L'Envoy,' we have a cursory notice of Elizabethan poets, beginning,—

‘Collyn was a mighty swaine;’

and, mentioning Rosamund [Daniel], Amyntas [Watson], Leander [Marlowe], he says,—

‘Amintas and Leander’s gone

* * * *

That so amorously could sing.’

And, of course, in 1593-1595 Watson and Marlowe had both recently died. So Edwards does not seem to have any doubt of the true author of 'Hero and Leander.'

And next he comes to 'Adon,' and possibly to Bacon. I will give this in full:—

‘Adon deafly* masking thro,
 Stately troupes rich conceited
 Shew’d he well deserved to,†
 Love’s delight on him to gaze,
 And had not love herself intreated
 Other nymphs had sent him baies.

* ? Deftly.

† ? Too.

‘Eke in purple roabes distain’d
Amidst the center of this chime
I have heard saie doth remaine
One whose power floweth far,
That should have been of our rime
The only object and the star.

‘Well could his bewitching pen,
Done* the Muses objects to us,
Although he differs much from men
Tilting under Frieries
Yet his golden art might woo us
To have honored him with laies.’

Now, who can this last poet be who ‘should have been the only object and the star’ of Edwards’ rime?

This puzzle has taxed the ingenuity of critics for many years past. Some have said the Earl of Oxford, Vere; some Lord Buckhurst; some Southwell the Jesuit; others Essex or Raleigh. Henry Morley thought Michael Drayton, and Dr. B. Nicholson thought Shakespeare; Dr. Grosart and the Rev. W. E. Buckley, the editor of the rare book itself, both declared for Bacon. So do I. For I cannot see how with anyone else we can get out of the ‘Adonis’ allusion—a poem which had just been written and was already becoming famous. If it be Bacon really, we

* Done = have done, auxiliary ‘have’ being omitted.

certainly have very early contemporary evidence from Edwards.

At this early date (1593-1595) Burbage's 'stable-boy' is, of course, out of the question.

The next piece of contemporary evidence is from Heywood. There is a very peculiar character in Thomas Heywood's 'Rape of Lucrece' (1608), which to me suggests that Heywood knew Francis Bacon was a sonneteer and maker of love ditties and poems.

I mean the character in the play who is called Lord Valerius. This aristocratic Roman is brought on the stage in the singular and uncalled for character of a singer of love songs and ballads, both in season and out of season, but chiefly the latter.

The question arises, What could induce Heywood to bring in such apparently irrelevant songs and love lyrics, and attach them to the acting part of a noble Roman of whom classic history records no such characteristics?

Surely it was the title of his play, 'The Rape of Lucrece,' and the current talk in literary circles that Bacon was a kind of Ovid junior and a sonneteer, which prompted Heywood to make such an unconventional character.

It is pretty clear now that Jonson knew the

current talk, and apparently believed it, or he would not have put Bacon and his sonnets and love-elegies so plainly on the boards in his 'Poetaster' and other plays, which were composed some time before Heywood's 'Rape of Lucrece.' Bacon had also written before this a Latin philosophical piece, under the name of 'Valerius Terminus.' This might have come to Heywood's knowledge also.

But let us see whether there is more internal proof that Lord Valerius is a skit on Bacon. The second mention of Valerius appears in the play 'Rape of Lucrece' (Act II., Scene i.) when the question is asked,—

‘But where’s Valerius?’

How does he taste these times?’

And this answer comes a little further on,—

‘Strangely; he is all song, he’s ditty all.

* * * * *

Conclusively, he’s from a toward hopeful gentleman
Transformed to a mere ballater, none knowing
Whence should proceed this transmutation.’

Shortly after this Valerius begins to sing of love, and we have these two noticeable lines:

‘Now what is love I will you show:
A thing that creeps and cannot go.’

Now these two lines are highly significant.

They are, in fact, nothing less than one of the most famous of the numerous 'parallelisms' between Bacon and Shakespeare which the Baconian heretics are so fond of collecting.

This is how they put it,—

'Love
Will creep in service where
it cannot go.'

*Two Gentlemen of
Verona*, IV. ii. 19.

'Love must creep in service
where it cannot go.'

*Bacon's Letter
to King James.*

I have already said in my former book that I do not rely much on the parallelisms adduced in such enormous numbers by Baconians ; but if there are a few grains of wheat, and I certainly think there are, among mountains of chaff, then this looks like one of the grains.

But let us take the very first words that Valerius utters on the boards ; we have seen before how useful it is to search the vestibule.

Valerius replies to Collatine,—'No doubt, Collatine, no doubt here's a giddy and drunken world ; it reels ; it hath got the staggers.'

Now, what says the great dramatist in Richard III. ?

'It is a reeling world indeed.'

Richard III., III. ii. 38.

And again :—

‘Does the world go round?
How come these staggers on me?’

Cymbeline, V. v. 233.

Again :—

‘A’ bears the third part of the world, man ; see’st not ?
The third part, then, is drunk.’

Antony and Cleopatra, II. vii. 98.

Again :—

‘He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.’

Taming of the Shrew, V. ii. 20.

I attach little importance to these parallelisms, but they are curious coincidences.

However, there seems rather more importance in the words which finish the second act. They are spoken by the Clown, and are, ‘O my sweet Lord Valerius.’ Whereupon *omnes exeunt* and curtain falls.

We cannot help being reminded of ‘O sweet Mr. Shakespeare,’ which meets us in ‘The Returne from Parnassus,’ and stands almost alone in its respectful courtesy title to the actor manager and poet ape. There were not many Mistrs then among the licensed vagrants who helped to amuse the audiences round about Shoreditch or the Bankside. Even University men who had taken their Arts degree, when they joined their interests

with the players', mostly lost their chance of being dubbed Mister.

We do not hear much of Mr. Nash, Mr. Spenser, Mr. Marlowe, or Mr. Ben Jonson, or even of Mr. Chapman, old and respected as was this last poet and playwright; but we get Mr. Shakespeare much more often. Was it not pretty well known to the author of 'The Returne from Parnassus,' and several other writers in those days, who 'sweet Mr. Shakespeare' and 'gentle Shakespeare' really was? I certainly think so from the way he is sometimes spoken of or alluded to, and consequently I think it just possible that Thomas Heywood was aiming in his ditty loving Lord Valerius at no less a prominent personage in the State than Sir Francis Bacon, who was about this time (1607-08) made Solicitor-General, Clerk of the Star Chamber, and *Lord* Treasurer. Of course there is the ready and obvious reply that he alone was called Mr. Shakespeare because he alone applied for his father's heraldic arms. But why call him Lord Valerius?

And why call him 'sweet' Lord Valerius? There is more in that word 'sweet' than meets the eye. It was almost an especial epithet for Shake-speare among poets, which he seemed to share with the other epithet 'gentle.' As a poet

he was named by his contemporaries 'mellifluous, honey tongued, and other adjectives of the same saccharine character, and his 'sugred' sonnets are almost proverbial. He was also one of the 'sweet gentlemen' whom Nash and Greene were rather annoyed with for supplying the 'taffeta fooles' with verses and plays.

Indeed, sweet and gentle are the distinguishing marks of Shake-speare's early Muse, the chief faults admitted against that Muse being 'love's foolish lazy languishments,' and that the written word was not altogether 'cleanly.'*

There are some curious allusions in the play called 'Histrionomastix' to *Sir Oliver Owllet* and his players. I leave the curious reader to conjecture who is referred to.

My next witness is a new one, who has not before been examined in this difficult case of identity. I refer to Edmund Bolton, who in his 'Hypercritica' seems to have had a good idea as to the real author of the two great Shakespeare poems.

In his 'Addresse the Fourth,' which deals with 'the best authors for written English' in prose and verse, he leaves out all notice of the poems

* Cf. 'The Returne from Parnassus,' p. 87 (Macray); Hall's Satires, Labeo, *passim*.

and sonnets of Shakespeare, though he mentions all such similar authors of fame and repute.

There was clearly some reason for this, for such popular and highly praised poems could not be undesignedly ignored in such a general survey as Bolton was giving.

I think the reason is that Bolton was unwilling to offend that great man of 'mystery,' the rising Francis Bacon, by letting out any literary secret, or by mentioning his poems at all, when he knew Bacon wished to repudiate his connection with them.

So he got out of the difficulty by mentioning Sir Francis Bacon under the first head of Historical Prose Writers.

He mentions him *last* in order, but certainly *first* in general praise, for he concludes :—

'Most of all Sir Francis Bacon's writings have the freshest and most savoury form and aptest utterances, that (as I suppose) our Tongue can bear.'

Another strange omission among the 'best authors in verse' is that of Marlowe and his famous 'Hero and Leander.'

There is an earlier rough draft of Bolton's 'Hypercritica' among the Rawlinson manuscripts, and there we have Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander'

duly recorded ; but in the later printed edition of the 'Hypercritica' this item is totally omitted, and nothing said of Marlowe whatever. Hence we may perhaps be permitted to suggest the inference that between the writing of the Rawlinson manuscript and the final revision of the book there was an appreciable interval during which Bolton found out the truth about Marlowe as an author and left him out, as well as Shakespeare, thus effectually excluding two 'masks' from the fame roll of the 'best authors.'

Bolton is also one of the first to give definitely the fame of that remarkable Elizabethan anonymous treatise, 'The Arte of English Poesie,' to Puttenham, but, knowing what has been just shown, it is not improbable that Bolton again wished to help the concealment of Bacon's literary work.

Indeed, the evidence for George or Richard Puttenham writing 'The Arte of English Poesie' is very weak. For twenty-five or thirty years there is no mention of any author for it, although the book itself is several times referred to and borrowed from, and sometimes spoken of as a work of authority. Bolton is nearly the first author who at all connected a Puttenham with this work, and this was more than thirty years

after 'The Arte of English Poesie' had been printed. No Christian name is given, and Bolton goes no further than saying the book was 'the work as the Fame is' of one of her (*i.e.*, Queen Elizabeth's) Gentlemen Pensioners, Puttenham. But this Puttenham authorship has been already considered.

There are several reasons for believing that Bolton knew the secret of Bacon's great literary activity. He was of Trinity Hall, Cambridge (Gabriel Harvey's college), where he says that he 'lived many years on his charge a free commoner.' He then proceeded to the Middle Temple, and 'lived in the best and choicest company of gentlemen.' He was in early life well acquainted with Camden, and in the year 1600 he first appears as an author, being a contributor to 'England's Helicon,' a notable book with which Bacon, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere, had much to do. He was also a great advocate for instituting a Royal Academy or College of Learning and Honour on a somewhat magnificent scale. We may be well assured this would greatly interest Bacon, who had Solomon's House of the 'New Atlantis,' or something like it, strongly impressed on his heart and brain. What more likely than

this to bring these two contemporaries into a literary correspondence and friendship? So I hold, from all these facts, that Bolton was a very likely man to know about Bacon's literary pre-eminence.

Having now come to the end of my 'new contemporary evidence for Bacon' I would ask 'those who know' to compare it with what is called the 'contemporary evidence' for William Shakspeare the actor.

Big books have been filled with this so called evidence, but of late years they have been so gutted that they almost present the appearance of the framework of a burnt-out house, the covers and the title being about all that remains solid and standing.

Indeed, the reservation of contemporaries in their references to Shakspeare is really very remarkable, when we consider both the number of persons who avoided any mention of him, and the extreme likelihood, also, that these same persons should frequently refer to him.

Look at Gabriel Harvey. Not the slightest allusion can be discovered in all Harvey's works and voluminous letters—at least, so says Mr. Grosart, who edited his works and made a most careful glossarial index of the whole.

Spenser, Sir James Harington, and many other literary Elizabethans from whom we should certainly expect some occasional references to their great contemporary, are all mute as a fish. What if they all went on the excellent principle of learning wisdom from proverbs, and took the advice, 'Never stir up Camarina,' as the best for the case in hand? Some such explanation on Baconian lines would do away with the otherwise insuperable difficulties, but they remain insuperable if Shakspeare's personality is retained.

Both Shakespeare's 'Centurie of Prayse' and the 300 extra allusions published as a kind of sequel and complement to it, though they are the compilation of excellent orthodox researchers, are disappointing, and are very far from fulfilling the promise of their title-pages. One would suppose that the praises of the Stratford man were in the mouths of hundreds of his contemporaries; but, as a matter of fact or proof, that is far from being the case—indeed, we get very little to help us with regard to the manager actor from Stratford and *his* wonderful poems and plays. In fact, far too much has been made of the so-called contemporary recognition of Shakespeare's excellence.

It may be admitted that the poems of 'Venus

and *Adonis* ' and ' *Lucrece* ' did undoubtedly receive considerable attention and praise shortly after their production. But the *kind of mention* these poems received is not exactly of the nature we require for settling a piece of literary history. We have, strange to say, nothing definite from the great and eminent *littérateurs* or historians of the age to help us to a verdict. Such authorities absolutely refrain from mentioning Shakespeare at all. The most careful researches into the works of John Selden, Henry Vaughan, Lord Clarendon, Viscount St. Alban, Lord Brooke, Sir John Beaumont, and many other notabilities in the literary world, have not been able to discover even the most trivial allusion to these wonderful productions or to their author.

CHAPTER X

NEW EVIDENCE FROM BEN JONSON

THE problem of the Shakespeare poems and plays partakes somewhat of the nature of a chess game or problem. The problem cannot be possibly solved without a good previous knowledge of the game. Like chess, this problem has many openings of a different character and name, and unless the solver is fairly well acquainted with the moves in these respective openings, and the way they have developed by the best players, he will have poor chance either of winning his game or finding the solution required. For instance, there is the Southampton opening and there is the Herbert opening, both chiefly connected with the problem of the sonnets and poems, but each very different from the other in inception and progress. Then there is the Ben Jonson opening, which has been much used by players ever since it was so brought into prominence in the famous First Folio of 1623

I have already dealt with the first few peculiar moves of this in 'Is it Shakespeare?' and shall presently add a few instances of Ben Jonson's play before this opening of his was invented. Then there is the Dark Lady's gambit, and her opening as well—a much used one—but the problems connected therewith seem still unsolved. We have also the Ruy Lopez or Queen's Doctor's gambit—a fatal one, as it proved. The two Knights' and Mary Fitton's moves must be known, and many other such complicated positions that for a junior pressman to judge the result off hand from a superficial survey of the game is simply absurd. But they do it, sometimes even without so much as looking at the board.

Let us now consider how Ben Jonson gives us further help to solve the Baconian problem. I have considered his Ovid junior, his Sir John Daw, his Poet-Ape, his Cheverell the lawyer, and his Luscus, and have no reason to think that Ben Jonson's help has led us to make any grossly mistaken moves so far. Does he suggest any new moves? I think he does, and I think he gives them in the earlier plays, before the stage quarrel was at its height in 1601. The plays I refer to chiefly are 'The Case is Altered,' 'Every Man out of his Humour,' and 'Cynthia's Revels.'

After a few statements I will proceed to make some suggestions.

(1) Jonson's earlier plays are full of allusions to personalities of the time, generally literary men. He draws pictures of the humours and habits and phraseology of certain characters whose identity is in several cases absolutely certain. For instance, Asper, Crites, and Horace in three different plays are all meant, with absolute certainty, to represent Jonson himself. Antonio Balladino and Poet Nuntius in two early succeeding plays stand for Anthony Munday without a doubt. Carlo Buffone, in 'Every Man out of his Humour,' is Charles Chester with equal certainty. I mention these *certainities* because some of the Shakespearian experts are pleased to say *ex cathedrâ* that whoever builds on the identities from Jonson's plays builds on 'a sandy foundation.' My answer is, there is plenty of firm rock to build upon if you can only get down to it, and I assert that rock is being reached frequently nowadays.

Look at Posthast in 'Histriomastix.' What a time he and his critics were floundering together in the quicksands! He is firm on the rock now. So is Carlo Buffone at last, being now on the hard rock where Aubrey first of all put him.

Of my own work of this kind I forbear to say more. My statement, then, is this. Ben Jonson *did* allude personally to certain living characters, and in some cases they have been actually and undoubtedly unveiled to present day readers. The inference is that the Ben Jonson 'moves' in the Baconian problem may help considerably to a correct solution, and need not be sandy or unlawful.

(2) The next statement is that Ben Jonson's personal allusions are often 'composite'—that is to say, he blends two different persons sometimes under the same stage name. This was done for sake of safety; it gave him a loophole of escape if threatened by the authorities for libel or scandal. Therefore, if in our investigations of a character in Jonson's plays we discover certain clear traces of Marston, and again traces equally distinct of Gabriel Harvey or Francis Bacon, perhaps in the same person, we are not to say at once, 'Here is a contradiction and no identity of any value;' but we are to remember how and why Ben Jonson so mixes up his characters, and do our best to separate their several characteristics.

(3) The third statement is that Jonson in his earlier plays rings the changes on certain characters, which reappear under different names in

successive plays. This gives us useful help in identifying them. Thus, we have Asper, Crites, Horace, Puntarvolo, Amorphus, Valentine, and others of a similar nature, though none quite so marked as these. The first trio represents Jonson throughout ; this is allowed by all. The second trio is untried ground, and as it seems to help the solution of the Bacon problem I offer a few suggestions.

The second trio of names seems to refer to one man throughout, because in all cases we have references to a great and boastful traveller who had been to Constantinople, the Tower of Babylon, Mesopotamia, the Indies, Jerusalem—in fact, such out of the way places as fall to the lot of few people to visit—while in addition to these we have particularly mentioned the ‘Goodwin Sands.’ Now, who *could* this be? We may be quite sure that the Tower of Babylon and the Goodwin Sands were not introduced without an object, nor were they likely to be chosen because they were the first names that came into Jonson’s head at the time. Ben was not such a slipshod satirist as that. When he used names in his early comedies he meant something by them. I shall presently venture to suggest who this peculiar traveller was, and give some reasons and

corroborations with regard to what must *prima facie* appear to be very ridiculous assertions.

Unfortunately, my suggestions cannot be fairly appreciated by the few extracts I can find space for here.

First I would say that Ben Jonson has generally some useful hint in the *name* of his characters, if we could only take it; for instance, Carlo Buffone is Charles Jester, *i.e.*, Charles Chester. There is the man *named* clearly, but no one saw it till quite recently. Now, I think Valentine gives us a hint, as a *name* pointing to Bacon. Valentine and Proteus of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona' were not likely to be unknown to such a dramatic critic as Jonson, or their true author, either. Jonson must know that Burbage's stable assistant was not equal to writing so courtly a play.

Moreover, in all these early plays by Jonson there is such abundance of allusion to well known living characters that this assured fact alone is sufficient to render my suggestions and conjectures *probable*, even if they seem at first sight rather far fetched. But in many cases I hope to pass the bounds of mere probability, and to show for certain that Bacon is the man to whom Jonson is referring.

What surprises me most in these my unveilings

of Jonson's hidden meaning is that not one of the many American and English students of Jonson, and of his share in the 'Poetomachia,' or poets' war, have noticed, so far as I know, these curious allusions.

I will take first the important though neglected play of

'THE CASE IS ALTERED.'

The date of this play is, fortunately, known with accuracy, for it was acted *after* Mere's 'Palladis Tamia' (1598), to which it refers, and *before* Nash's 'Lenten Stuff' (1599), which notices the 'merry cobbler' in the 'witty play of "The Case is Altered."' So we fix the date between 1598 and 1599, a narrow limit. It was not printed till 1609.

Two of the characters of the play are skits on Harvey and Nash, *Juniper* standing for Harvey, and *Onion* for Nash.* Antonio Balladino, another character, stands for Anthony Munday. These three are certain identifications—at least, I think they will appear so to anyone who will read their parts carefully in the play. But my present object is to show that the character of

* This has been shown at some length in *Notes and Queries* by Mr. Hart, who is, I believe, a Shakespearian.

Valentine is a skit on Francis Bacon, and shows on the face of it that Ben Jonson well knew who was the true author of the Shakespeare plays.

I will first draw attention to certain special *words* and *scenes* which point to Bacon, and next unveil the traveller to the Goodwin Sands, Constantinople, and other odd places.

Words and Expressions.

As Juniper and Onion can be clearly seen from the *words* used by them or of them in the play, so, I hold, is the case with Valentine. I quote from Cunningham's edition of Jonson, and my first extract is from vol. ii., p. 521, italicizing the significant words :—

‘JUNIPER. Come on you precious rascal *Sir Valentine*, I'll give you a health i' faith, for the heavens, you *mad Capricio*, hold hook and line.'

Now, 'Capricio' is almost a test word for Bacon—it is used by Harvey, Marston, and other contemporaries, to denote a phantastical and capricious intellect, as well as here, too, by Ben Jonson. None of them *name* Bacon—they dare not—but no one suits the several allusions so well. Take Jonson, for instance, in 'The Poetaster' (Act III., Scene i.). He brings on Tucca, talking to Histrio, a player (viz., Alleyn, of the Fortune Theatre, as

appears plainly by the allusions), about the players and poets of the time,—

‘There are some of you players honest gentlemanlike scoundrels, and suspected to have some wit, as well as *your poets both at drinking and breaking of jests, and are companions for gallants.* . . . Dos’t thou not know that there?’

‘HISTRIO. No, I assure you, Captain.’

Tucca then recommends this Capriccio as one of the poets who ‘pens high, lofty, in a new stalking strain,’ and that if Histrio secured his services, ‘if he pen for thee once,’ that then Histrio would soon be a rich man.

Now, no successful or popular playwright at this period suits Jonson’s allusions so well as the author of the Shakespeare plays, and by using the name Capriccio Jonson shows that he knew the *real* author, for no one ever called the Stratford man either phantastical or capricious—*he* was an honest, sensible, money making man.

No, Capriccio stood for Bacon here (1601), just as mad Capriccio stood for him in ‘The Case is Altered’ (1599); but this harping on the same word in two nearly successive plays was, I suppose, too obvious, and so Ben Jonson in the next edition of ‘The Poetaster’ altered Capriccio to Pantalabus, and got rid of the Baconian allusion here, just as

he got rid of the Baconian allusion 'Knight' elsewhere in a second edition.

'Capricious' is used again in 'The Case is Altered' in a very significant manner, by Valentine to Juniper (Bacon to Harvey), and as we have both 'capricious' and 'capricio' in two Shakespeare plays* that hail from the same period, or a little earlier, we get strong additional force to the suggestion that under the name of Valentine we have marked allusions to the real author of the immortal plays, whose odd words would be fresh in the minds of the play going critics among the audience, for whom Jonson especially prepared his numerous allusions. In fact, Jonson in his early plays especially strove to depict the 'humours' of the different classes of society, the Court ('Cynthia's Revels'), and the literary circles, and he 'spiced' his plays with semi-concealed personal allusions, often purposely enigmatical and 'composite.' But they were comparatively easy to discover then, for the dress, action, and theatrical make up all helped to point to the man or woman alluded to.

* In one passage Touchstone says to Audrey, 'I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet honest Ovid was among the Goths.' (A very Baconian pun, for 'Goths' and 'goats' were pronounced almost alike.) See 'As You Like It,' III. ii. 7.

We nowadays are, of course, without this advantage of seeing a personal caricature, but, in spite of Jonson's cautious allusions, many of his caricatures and topical allusions have been discovered recently, and I am proud, naturally, to claim my share in this work.

I next come to a very marked allusion in the extraordinary health which Juniper-Harvey gives to Valentine-Bacon. 'I'll give you a health, i' faith,' he says, '*hold hook and line*,' and that is the end of the scene, and they leave the stage together (Act I., Scene i.).

To the man in the street, or even in the club, nowadays, this would be pure nonsense ; but at that time it was pure Shakespeare, taken from a piece only recently acted, and would be recognised as 'a play-scrap' by the critical frequenters of the drama. It is to be found in '2 Henry IV.,' II. iv., 171, where Pistol says: 'Hold hook and line, say I; Down, down, dogs!' and it occurs nowhere else in the whole of Shakespeare.

If this and many other almost equally striking allusions to the Shakespeare plays do not bring Valentine into premeditated connection with the real author, whom Jonson clearly knew, I do not understand evidence.

The next significant word I take is 'hieroglyphic.'

It occurs in the first meeting of Juniper and Valentine :—

‘JUNIPER. What, Valentine! . . . tell me how thou dost, sweet ingle.

‘VALENTINE. Faith, Juniper, the better to see thee thus *frælich*.

‘JUN. Nay, ’slid I’m no *changeling*; I am Juniper still. I keep the pristinate; ha, you mad *hieroglyphic*, when shall we swagger?

‘VAL. Hieroglyphic! What meanest thou by that?

‘JUN. Mean! od’so is it not a good word, man? What, stand upon meaning with your friends?’ and presently he adds: ‘Valentine, I prithee *ruminate* thyself welcome. What, *fortuna de la guerra*.’

And then Balthasar comes in shortly afterwards, and also welcomes Valentine :—

‘BALTH. Welcome, sweet rogue . . . And how is’t, man? What *allo coragio*?’

Now, I hold that the words I have drawn attention to by the italics point to Shakespeare and his recent plays indubitably. The two foreign exclamations occur in ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ and in ‘All’s Well.’

The little Indian *changeling* plays a conspicuous part in ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ and also

most probably in the blind Indian Boy Prince of the 'Gesta Grayorum,' and thereby hangs a Baconian tale, or tail, which no one has managed properly to adjust. Ben in the witness-box on this subject would be very interesting, I have no doubt.

Frælich, or frolic, is used also in Shakespeare, but as Jonson brings this word up in several other places where Bacon seems intended, there seems to have been some hidden reference here which is now lost.

But when Jonson makes two different characters of his play welcome Valentine in certain outlandish expressions recently heard and known through Shakespeare's plays, we come to but one conclusion, and that conclusion will be strongly corroborated by the fact that Valentine is addressed as 'you mad hieroglyphic.' What an extraordinary fashion of speech! It is almost as bad as calling the Billingsgate woman in the tale an 'isosceles triangle.' What could the word possibly mean as applied to Valentine? First let us see what was meant by the word. The 'New English Dictionary' gives this,—'A figure, device, or sign, having some hidden meaning; a secret or enigmatical symbol or emblem.' Ah! this gives us the clue—it was

'Bacon's head' which he promised, if needs be, to show to Southampton in 'Lucrece.'* It was the hieroglyphic F_B^R which Bacon used in varying forms to put at the head of 'Lucrece' and other 'hidden' works of his. And Jonson, like Marston, knew the secret, and we credit Jonson with this knowledge, especially since we are well aware that he used a hieroglyphic himself of a nearly exactly similar kind against Bacon as Cheveril the lawyer, and also in the dedication of his 'Epigrams' says plainly that he, at least, had no cause to hide himself under a hieroglyphic—for 'I had nothing in my conscience, to expressing of which I did need a *cypher*.' Marston knew Bacon's hieroglyphic, too, and referred to its one letter which bounded or enclosed the others—*i.e.*, the F of F_B^R . This was in his contemporaneous 'Satires,' so it is not likely that the omnivorous reader and critic Jonson would be ignorant of this device or *hieroglyphic*, as he was the first to call it.

Harvey used the word once or twice, though not quite in this sense, and also the words *change-ling* and *capricious*, so the words would come in aptly in a dialogue between Harvey (Juniper) and Valentine (Bacon), and Ben could have thrown it upon Harvey if challenged by Cheveril the

* See 'Is it Shakespeare?' chapter I., for this.

lawyer, or any other offended aristocrat, and so escaped. Ben was clever, for the same plan could have been adopted with regard to Capriccio. But Capriccio was too marked, and he had to alter that.

There are other words, such as *alabaster*, p. 548 (Richard III. and Harvey), and *assoil*, p. 549 (Puttenham—*i.e.*, Bacon—in this peculiar sense), and *peregrination through Mesopotamia*, all pointing to Bacon and Harvey, though the last is peculiarly Baconian; also *keisar*, etc. But we will leave the *words* pointing to Bacon, and come to the

Scenes which indicate Bacon.

These scenes are Act II., Scene iv., and Act IV., Scene i. They deserve reading carefully, and I have no doubt that others more expert than myself will be able to add much that has escaped me.

In the former scene we have Valentine appealed to as an authority on *fencing in Italy*, and on *theatres and the drama in Italy*. And when we remember how well Bacon, from his friendship with Essex, must have been acquainted with Saviolo's book of fencing, which was dedicated to Essex, and how Shakespeare also borrowed from it in his plays, and still further how Bacon-Shakespeare drew his plays and characters

from Italy—if, I say, we remember these things in reading through the scene, we shall not hesitate to admit that Bacon is lying *perdu* there. Harvey is mixed in as well, I do not deny that, but I hold Bacon to be the principal character in this scene.

The other scene is a remarkable one indeed (Act IV., Scene i.), and I cannot understand how the stinkards and groundlings could sit through it, as far as the words go ; but doubtless there was ludicrous action and make up in the three characters which passed it off satisfactorily. The action is of the nature of a dialogue between two finical foreign pages, who meet in a private room in a nobleman's house, and take the opportunity to practise the last fashionable society phrases and motions then used when aristocrats, who had travelled, met each other in public places.

I take this scene to be, from beginning to end, a fine and cleverly arranged Jonsonian skit on the extraordinary frequency of courtesy words and finical compliments used by that master of decorum Bacon-Shakespeare in the plays already acted.

It is well known that the author of the immortal plays was distinguished above all contemporary writers and dramatists by his excep-

tionally frequent use of such courtesy phrases as 'good-morrow,' 'good-day,' 'bonjour' (once used by an extraordinary anachronism in 'Titus Andronicus'), and other polite salutations, when gentlemen meet each other. Indeed, we know Bacon studied these phrases and put them in his 'Promus,' to be brought forth on proper occasions, and wrote on the back of the leaf of the manuscript 'Formularies and Elegancies.' We have in this scene of Jonson's play a very fine list of Shakespearian 'Formularies and Elegancies' brought before the audience for their amusement and ridicule, and it is Valentine that is being covertly satirized, though he is not on the stage as a speaker.

How we know that it is Valentine who fits these allusions is in this way. The two pages had just begun their practice, when Onion calls from without, 'Sirrah Finio!' on which Pacue, the other page, exclaims, 'Mort Dieu, le paisant!'—that is to say, 'Sdeath, it's the peasant!' Onion then comes on the scene, and says, 'Didst thou see Valentine?' and the other page answers, 'Valentine? No.' Now, the point of this is only clear when we remember that Valentine in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona' is once called (very inappropriately, as it seems) 'peasant Valentine,' and

it seems that sometimes this word 'peasant' was applied by contemporaries to the author of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona.'

So it seems that one of the pages, hearing a voice calling out, at once, conscience-struck at what they were going to do, thought it was the very man they were going to parody and ridicule, and cries out: 'Sdeath, here's our peasant himself!' Onion, overhearing this, and knowing well enough who 'the peasant' was (for Onion was Nash, who was strongly suspected by Harvey of aiming at great folks by this very word), says: 'What, was Valentine here, or have you seen him?' But I fear I have overlaboured this to make it clear.

I hold that Jonson, with great stagecraft, thus brought Valentine in merely to prepare the critical audience for what was really coming. By somewhat similar 'business' did Toole make himself heard before he appeared, by calling out something in his whimsical way while in the street or passage outside.

But in these days of Shakespeare knowledge we do not require such a preliminary hint as Jonson vouchsafed to the critical playgoers. Nearly every complimentary word or phrase in this most interesting and neglected scene of 'The Case is Altered' is to be found in the Shakespeare

plays that had been recently written. 'Bonjour;' 'Good-morrow;' 'Good signior;' 'Glad to see you;' 'I return you most kind thanks, sir;' 'Dieu vous garde;' 'God save you;' 'Welcome, signior;' 'By this hand;' 'Faith, exceeding well;' 'Pray be covered, I beseech you, sir;' 'Pardonnez-moi, you wrong me' — all these occur, and some of them an extraordinary number of times, in the plays already known.

I hold that I have sufficiently shown that Jonson referred to the Shakespeare plays and their author, who was the very glass of fashion in his courteous decorum, which art he certainly never learnt among the yokels of Stratford-on-Avon, nor among the stable boys and ostlers in Burbage's pay.

Having thus, I hope, somewhat prepared the ground for the entrance of the great traveller Valentine, who was acquainted with the Goodwin Sands, the Tower of Babylon, Constantinople, and Mesopotamia (blessed word!), he shall introduce himself with 'Bonjour, messieurs, alla coragio; by this hand, you have wronged me.'

The 'great traveller' is first brought into notice just after Juniper had called Valentine a 'mad hieroglyphic' (p. 520), and Juniper proceeds to recall these travels thus,—

‘JUNIPER. Sirrah ingle, I think thou hast seen all the strange countries in Christendom since thou went’st.

‘VALENTINE. I have seen some, Juniper.

‘JUNIPER. You have seen Constantinople?

‘VALENTINE. Ay, that I have.

‘JUNIPER. And Jerusalem, and the Indies, and Goodwin Sands, and the Tower of Babylon, and Venice and all.

‘VALENTINE. Ay, all.’

Now, what contemporary can possibly be brought into connection with *all* these specially selected places? I can suggest no one but the *very man* we have taken for Valentine in all the other places of the play—viz., the author of the Shakespeare plays, whom Jonson knew to be Bacon.

But surely neither Shake-speare of Gray’s Inn nor Shakspeare of Stratford ever went to Constantinople, or Jerusalem either. Possibly not; but I will quote a passage from ‘Henry V.’ whose date (1599) we know for certain from internal evidence, and which was, therefore, probably being performed in London at this very time at another theatre; and this, I believe, will explain the Constantinople allusion.

In Act V., Scene ii., King Henry says to Katherine,—

‘Shall not thou and I, between St. Dennis and

St. George, compound a boy half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard ?'

I hold that Jonson knew that Bacon (who was himself a half-French, half-English lad at one time) was the author of this 'phantastical' passage, and therefore sent Valentine-Bacon to Constantinople, and also to some places, such as the Goodwin Sands and Jerusalem, etc., which also, like Constantinople, are referred to by name specially in the plays. For instance, the Goodwin Sands are mentioned three times in the early plays before 1600, and Jerusalem is mentioned ten times, but, strange to say, *never after this Jonsonian satire*. The Indies are mentioned several times, and of course Venice.

This accounts for all the places except one; and so Bacon had been to all of them, *as an author*, in having referred to them, and therefore Ben makes Valentine, who stands for Bacon, go to these places as a traveller.

The exception is the Tower of Babylon; for though Babylon does occur once in Shakespeare, it is only in the burden of a song, and Jonson must have meant something more cutting than that. Perhaps he was thinking of Harvey's friend, who wrote a long piece of Latin verse to

his dear Gabriel just before *starting for Babylon* and the Caucasus on a mission for Leicester, as he declared. But was this young 'traveller' Bacon? Quien sabe? It may be so.

Nor must it be forgotten that these Constantinople and Babylon (Bagdad?) allusions *may* be connected with 'Huon of Bordeaux,' which old French romance was well known to Bacon, for Oberon and his fairies are there, and hobgoblins as well; and Huon had to go to the court or palace (or tower?) of Babylon or Bagdad, and to bring back a lock of the Emir's beard, which is not unlike the curious 'phantasy' of 'Henry V.,' which could hardly have entered into the level and 'business' head of Shakspeare of Stratford.*

That Bacon was chaffed on the stage by Jonson as a traveller of an amazing kind, under the different characters of Valentine in this play, of Puntarvolo in 'Every Man out of his Humour,' and of Amorphus (a composite character) in 'Cynthia's Revels,' will be admitted by careful and unprejudiced readers.

* According to some German authorities, we are told that in Northern folk-lore, *Hamlet and Tamburlaine stormed and took Constantinople!* I have not been able to go deeper than this superficial statement; perhaps some expert will explain it.

‘EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR.’

Let us take Puntarvolo first, and notice the very curious name. Jonson generally meant some allusion by his *names*, as we have already shown. What did he mean by Puntarvolo? Well, it is the Italian for a bodkin, and Sir Bodkin the knight leads us on close to Bacon, though, of course, we cannot be expected to enter into the jest as well as did the audience who first heard the play; for they were acquainted with the last jests of the town, and were on the look out for their appearance on the stage. Now, Sir Puntarvolo, or, in plain English, Sir Bodkin, is described in the *Dramatis Personæ* prefixed to the play, as :—

‘A vain-glorious knight, over-Englishing his travels and wholly consecrated to singularity, the very Jacob’s staff of compliment,’ etc.

This does not look unlike Bacon, but why Sir Bodkin? Well, perhaps as a counter-thrust to the redoubtable *Spear* of Pallas, which Bacon professed to *Shake* at Ignorance, and other ‘deficiencies’ of mortal man.

Johnson scoffed at it as a mere ‘bodkin,’ and added insult to injury by making Carlo Buffone call Puntarvolo a ‘yeoman-feuterer,’ which is a

very ambiguous expression; for though 'feuterer' is a dog-keeper (from the French *vautrier*), as Puntarvolo was in the play, yet the word 'fewter' means to put one's spear in rest (*cf.* 'Faerie Queene,' IV. iv. 10), and thus we get a thrust at Bacon-Shakespeare—a rather far-fetched one to us, but more easily understood when these obsolete words were often in people's mouths. Then there was Hamlet's 'bare bodkin' in the famous soliloquy. This might well have been heard of as early as this, and made a joke against the author. And, again, there is Nash, who speaks of a Mounseer Bodkin who praised Harvey. It was really Bodin who was meant, but Nash must have changed the word into 'Bodkin' for some personal reason or other. In fact, whatever way we look at the *name* Bodkin, which Jonson gave to this traveller knight in his play, we seem always carried in the direction of Bacon.

In Act II. Scene i., Puntarvolo addresses his lady, when she appears at the window, in the following strain:—

'PUNTARVOLO. What more than heavenly pulchritude is this,
What magazine or treasury of bliss?
Dazzle, ye organs to my optic sense,
To view a creature of such eminence;

O, I am planet-struck,* and in yon sphere
A brighter star than Venus doth appear!

‘FASTIDIOUS BRISK. How! in verse!

‘CARLO BUFFONE. An extacy, an extacy, man.’

Now, I take this to be a parody on the famous balcony scene in ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ just as in ‘The Poetaster’ Jonson makes a still more elaborate and ecstatic parody on the same incident, one of Francis Bacon’s most notable love-ecstasies, as Jonson, no doubt, well knew.

The ‘Romeo and Juliet’ parody by Jonson in his ‘Poetaster’ was given at length in ‘Is it Shakespeare?’ I did not know of Puntarvolo then. Sir Bodkin does not use so many Baconian *words* as did Valentine in ‘The Case is Altered,’ but he brings out the word ‘real’ twice, being the only times it is used by Ben Jonson. This is a Bacon-Promus word, and is also one of the three words nailed to the counter in Marston’s satires as belonging to ‘Judicial Torquatus.’

* Cf. Shakespeare :

‘Some *planet strike* me down.’

Titus Andronicus, II. iv. 14.

‘The nights are wholesome: then no *planets strike*.’

Hamlet, I. i. 162.

‘It is a bawdy planet that will strike.’

Winter’s Tale, I. ii. 201.

One of the most suggestive scenes for our purpose is that scene, near the end of the play, in which Sir Puntarvolo strikes Carlo Buffone, the loose tongued libeller, and seals up his mouth. Puntarvolo took patiently a good many of Carlo's unpleasant allusions, but matters came to a climax when Carlo Buffone refers to a German 'familiar' who could turn himself into a dog, or anything else, for certain hours. On this Puntarvolo strikes him, and afterwards seals up his mouth.

Carlo Buffone's allusion seems to have been to a German 'conjurer,' or magician such as Faustus, and Cornelius Agrippa with his mythical dog, and the transformation scenes that such conjurers could bring about. Why this should so particularly annoy Puntarvolo is not at first sight so clear. But I should say it had reference to the 'conjurer' of Gray's Inn, of whom we hear in the 'Gesta Grayorum,' possibly so called on account of Dr. Faustus and his devotion to alchemy and other occult conjuring. And as for the 'dog' allusion, it is known now how often Bacon was called a 'dog' (through the Greek) in Marston and elsewhere—*mendacia famæ*, but very exasperating, and quite enough to rouse Bacon to use the power of the seal.

Bacon had the power and influence necessary to stop people's mouths, and their libels as well, and he used it, as Jonson finds, in the Star Chamber and by the Privy Council, too. As a matter of history or tradition, it was Raleigh who stopped up Charles Chester's mouth ; but that need not prevent Jonson using the incident as a hit at Bacon ; indeed, he preferred an indirect or puzzling allusion, which might be transferred easily to another person, as has been shown before.

Nash gives a long account of what punishment was meted out to Charles Chester (Buffone) by 'a great personage,' but he does not name him (Nash, i. 190, McKirrow's edition).

Puntarvolo also, like Valentine, is to go to Constantinople on his wonderful travels. He is to go to the Turk's Court there, and 'to bring thence a Turk's mustachio,' which bears a striking likeness to what Shake-speare Bacon made Henry V. say about his 'half-French, half-English boy that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard.' And, again, in 'Much Ado About Nothing' (II., i. 271) Benedict says : 'I will fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard.'

And there is the Huon of Bordeaux incident of a similar kind. I think all these points, taken

together and duly considered, are sufficient to induce a slight presumption that Sir Puntarvolo or Sir Bodkin was intended by Jonson to call Francis Bacon into the thoughts of the curious, the gossiping, and the critical, among the audience.*

But we now pass to the next play,—

‘CYNTHIA’S REVELS.’

Here we have a traveller again, under the name of Amorphus this time, and the descriptions

* We have also Puntarvolo’s curious motto, ‘Not without mustard.’ What *can* this mean? Enigmatical as it is, I do not think we need go far to find the solution. The play of ‘As You Like It’ was performed about this time, as we have before seen, and it is here that we shall find both the knight and the mustard. In the second scene of the first act ‘a certain knight that swore by his honour’ a strange oath about pancakes and mustard, and swore ‘the mustard was naught.’ And in the play of ‘Taming of the Shrew’ Katherine is told, ‘You shall have the mustard, or else you get no beef,’ and the incident is dwelt upon through several lines of the drama.

I hope it will not be thought a rash conjecture if I take it that Ben Jonson is here mocking at Shakespeare’s plays and their author—the travelled ‘knight’ whom he knew well enough. Besides, this *non sanz droict* was Shakespeare’s motto, and facetious Ben may have meant a sly thrust at that as well.

given of him in the play, his actions and manners in the different scenes, and the words he uses, all point strongly to Francis Bacon—in fact, so strongly that the evidence can hardly be put aside, and is therefore a good corroboration of the Valentine and Puntarvolo allusions.

There is much more in this play than I can afford space to quote or to annotate; I will therefore give only short extracts here and there, with italics to draw attention to the Baconian allusions.

It must be remembered that this play deals with the Court and with aristocrats. Former critics and interpreters have, it seems, failed to notice this. Consequently Asotus has been taken to represent Lodge, which is very unlikely, and Hedon and Anaides have been degraded to the social position of Marston and Dekker, though distinctly described as ‘courtiers’ and ‘gallants.’ While Amorphus has been identified with the impossible Barnaby Rich (Fleay) and the equally impossible Anthony Munday (Penniman); indeed, few of Jonson’s allusive plays have been so ludicrously misinterpreted as ‘Cynthia’s Revels.’

I think we shall see that Bacon as Amorphus is somewhat more reasonable than either Rich or Munday.

Now, Amorphus is described as :

‘The very *mint of compliment*, all his behaviours are *printed*, his face is another *volume of Essays*.’

N.B. Bacon’s ‘Essays’ had been only recently published, and were almost the first of their kind in England, or, at any rate, the best yet produced.

Again, Amorphus describes himself thus,—

‘Knowing myself an essence so sublimated and refined by travel ; of so studied and well exercised a gesture ; so alone in fashion ; *able to render the face of any statesman living*, and to *speak the mere extraction of language*,’ etc.

Cf. Bacon’s deracinated phraseology.

Again, he says to his pupil Asotus,—

‘Come, look not pale, observe me, *set your face* and enter.’

Cf. Marston’s ‘Scourge of Villainy,’ p. 276 (Halliwell), where Bacon is alluded to as having a ‘glass-set face’—*i.e.*, a face composed before a looking-glass.

Again, Hedon says of Amorphus :

‘You must know, lady, he cannot speak out of a *dictionary method*.’

Again, we have Amorphus presented (Act IV.,

Scene i.) as a good hand at masques and revels, especially in the inventive parts—better in his own estimation than Ben Jonson.

In the play the Queen had asked for some ‘solemn revels’ or ‘device of wit’ to entertain her on some early future occasion. Amorphus suggests a masque, and then there is a question of sending for Crites,—*i.e.*, Ben Jonson—and getting his advice.

To this Amorphus replies,—

‘Why his advice more than Amorphus? Have not I *invention* afore him? *learning* to better that invention above him? and infanted with pleasant travel——’

Here he breaks off. But who else could the speaker represent except Francis Bacon?

Like Valentine and Puntarvolo, Amorphus was a knight, and so signs himself to a letter he wrote, and we hear also that he was ‘the first that ever enriched his country with the laws of the duello.’ This allusion evidently refers to Saviolo’s book on ‘Fencing and Honour in Quarrels,’ recently dedicated to Essex, and, as the Shakespearian play of ‘As You Like It’ had humorously brought some of the arguments of this courtly book before the public more recently still, there seems good reason to believe that Jonson was alluding to the real

author of the immortal plays, here as elsewhere. Moreover, there is a long satirical account of how Amorphus travelled to the Courts of the Emperor and various Kings and Princes on the Continent, and what happened to him in such lofty surroundings—all strongly reminding us of George Puttenham's tales in his 'Arte of English Poesie,' a book which we know Jonson possessed, for his copy is in the British Museum, and whose real author I have shewn elsewhere, by many proofs, to be Bacon. And, further still, a great part of the play is taken up by an amusing but rather prolix account of Amorphus showing his pupil Asotus how to use the 'most cunning weapons of court compliment,' viz., the 'Bare Accost,' the 'Better Regard,' the 'Solemn Address,' and the 'Perfect Close.'

Who better qualified than the courtly and decorous Francis Bacon to be the instructor here? and how like to what Touchstone says in 'As You Like It,' about the weapons of good manners, derived from Saviolo:—

'O, sir, we quarrel in print, by the book, as you have books for good manners. I will name you the degrees. The first, *the retort courteous*; the second, *the quip modest*; the third, *the reply churlish*; the fourth, *the reproof valiant*; the fifth,

the countercheck quarrelsome ; the sixth, the lie with circumstance ; the seventh, the lie direct.'

How could the stage critics fail to see the allusions of Amorphus and the man they were aimed at ?

Gabriel Harvey has been suggested for Amorphus, and some of the words used in the first act of the play are peculiar to him ; but he was not a knight, and not of much interest to London playgoers, and if Ben used him a little in his 'composite' manner for self-protection from libel, the rest of the play and its marked allusions show that Bacon was the main object of Jonson's satires.

Again, Amorphus is described as 'a traveller that hath drunk of the fountain,' and

'has caused such a drought in the presence with reporting the wonders of this new water, that all the ladies and gallants lie languishing upon the rushes . . . sighing one to another, and gasping, as if each of them expected a cock from the fountain to be brought into his mouth.'

I take this to be a reference to the known popularity of 'Venus and Adonis' at Court among the gallants and ladies. The fountain was the fountain of the Muses, from which came the Castalian water with which Apollo gave 'full

cups' to the author, as appeared on the title-page of the new love-poem, 'Venus and Adonis,'—

'Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.'

And Amorphus and Crites have a long dialogue about this water, in which *Helicon* and the *Muses' Well* are both referred to, and Amorphus is chaffed about *not* writing *verses* since he has become a water-drinker. It is also 'New Fountain water' of which Lady Arete, the quintessence of Court virtue, will not drink when she is asked, and it appears that Crites (Jonson) would not be a drinker, either. All this points to the wanton Muse of Francis Bacon, as I think, which so attracted the more frivolous members of the upper classes, and ran through so many early editions.

Amorphus speaks also of metheglin, which he had tasted 'from the hand of an Italian antiquary, who derives it authentically from the *Duke of Ferrara's bottles*.' Does this refer to the use of Sir John Harington's translations of Ariosto (1591)?*

In interpreting 'Cynthia's Revels,' it must be kept in mind that the play is a satire on the

* Cf. Hunter's 'New Illustrations of Shakespeare.'

people of the Court, especially the wealthy, extravagant and licentious ones. The very *names* of the courtiers in the play show this. Hence Hedon, Anaides, and Asotus (a beardless youth, and therefore not Lodge, as many have supposed), would represent prominent characters of the aristocracy, and would be easily divined by the guesses of the critics then. It is not so easy to do so now. But seeing that Dekker, in his 'Satiromastix,' complains of Ben Jonson's base ingratitude to his friends, and, most significantly, to *Patrons* and *Mæcenases*,* and seeing that Dekker was writing this attack just after 'Cynthia's Revels' and 'The Poetaster' had been produced, there can be no harm in suggesting that aristocrats were meant rather than playwrights. In this play, as in the others, the *words* used point to Bacon as well as the *incidents* of the piece.

Amorphus uses the more or less common words:—*Intendments*, *obsequious*, *statist*, *practic* and *theoric*, *distemperature*, *intrinsicate*, *redoundeth*, *retrograde*, *paradox*, etc. Now, these all appear in the Shakespeare plays *recently acted*, and

* Cf. the whole passage a few pages on, *s.v.* 'Poetaster.'

some of them (*e.g.*, 'distemperature') are repeated there as often as five times. There are also Harvey words, but only in Act I. Not only is this 'traveller' an expert in words, but he professes to be an authority in musical diction. He gives a lyrical ditty on a glove, and comments thus,—

'Do you not observe how excellently the ditty is affected in every place? that I do not marry a word of short quantity to a long note? . . . you see how I do enter with an odd minum and drive it through the brief; which no intelligent musician, I know, but will affirm to be very rare, extraordinary and pleasing.'

On this I would only say that there is no critic of poetry who examines the question of musical metre and tones and accents at anything like the length which Puttenham devotes to this subject in pp. 5, 6, and the succeeding chapters on Proportion in his 'Arte of English Poetrie.' That Puttenham was no other than Francis I claim to have shown by many proofs elsewhere.

It seems clear enough that Ben Jonson does attack the Shakespeare plays both in 'Cynthia's Revels' and many others. This was not 'malignity against Shakespeare,' as some contended in Malone's time, and caused a most bitter contro-

versy on the subject, one party holding Ben guilty of unworthy malignity against his manifest superior from Stratford, and the other party holding that Jonson neither maligned the plays nor was ever unfriendly to the Warwickshire actor who wrote them. Both parties were ludicrously wrong, for they did not possess the evidence we have now. There are no proofs of any malignity to the *actor* Shakspeare; on the contrary, Ben seems to really like the Stratford man, but Ben has many a covert sneer and many a damaging allusion to the immortal plays in early days before he 'crept into' Bacon's bosom, and honoured and praised him as the very ἀκμή, the very point and summit, of the literary genius of the time.

In the induction to this play of 'Cynthia's Revels' we read of plays filled with 'stale apothegms,' 'other men's jests,' and 'old books,' and also of *umbræ*, or ghosts, of some three or four plays departed a dozen years hence. We also read of matter that the authors 'have twice or thrice cooked,' and of stages haunted with such hobgoblins. All these allusions seem to point to Gray's Inn rather than Stratford, and to that recluse in his cell in London who was constantly revising what he had written, and improving his plays both for the stage and for the press.

I therefore propound the equation, not mathematical, but literary, that Amorphus, Puntarvolo, and Valentine each stand for Bacon, and may be substituted for him. It of course follows that, as they were all great travellers, so must Bacon also be.

Lastly, then, there is the objection to consider of those who say that Bacon was not a traveller properly speaking, and probably never went farther than to Paris, and to a few other French towns, during his whole life. This can be met, as I believe, satisfactorily.

For even if it could be shown that Bacon was no traveller, and never even left his native country or crossed the Channel, still, that would not do away with the allusions to the author of the Shakespeare plays; for it might well be supposed that Jonson was satirizing their author as one who made his *characters* travel here, there, and everywhere within the limits of a few acts. This was quite contrary to the classical traditions and what is known as 'the unities' of the drama; and Jonson, who was an orthodox classical dramatist, was strongly against the new romantic drama and its habit of constantly breaking the principles of what Jonson considered to be true art. So these references to Goodwin Sands and Venice and

Constantinople, this 'practise to vault thus from one side of the world to another,' as Jonson terms it in Act I., Scene i., may only be a pleasant skit on Shakespeare's methods of dramatizing.

And I hold that this is the true explanation of the apparent contradiction, and that a neglected passage in the induction to 'Every Man out of his Humour' clearly proves it.

Literary critics are well aware that, in this long and unique induction, Jonson as Asper gives such an excellent account of his views on the legitimate drama, and such a fine definition of humour, that it is the *locus classicus* for the subject, as far as he is concerned.

Now, towards the end, and just before the prologue, enters (after discussing the unities and such like supposed requisites of a true drama) Mitis, one of the characters representing a stage critic, who asks this question,—

'How comes it then that in some one play we see so many seas, countries and kingdoms, passed over with such admirable dexterity?'

Cordatus (another stage critic) answers,—

'O that but shows how well *the authors can travel* in their vocation, and outrun the apprehension of their auditory.'

Now, I take this to be a sly and satirical attack

upon Francis Bacon and the Shake-speare plays, and the true explanation of the curious fact that Amorphus, Puntarvolo, and Valentine are all said to be travellers, and to go to such out of the way places. In fact, the author of the Shake-speare plays *had travelled in his vocation as dramatist* to the Indies, Constantinople, the Goodwin Sands, and the rest, though neither he nor any living dramatist had visited them all in person. Especially had he travelled to the Indies.

Shake-speare in no less than eighteen places of his plays refers to the Indies and to Indians, and frequently alludes to the strange beasts, birds, and plants of the New Continent as well as the old one.

If anyone cares to see how the author of the Shake-speare plays was interested in the Indies and America, I refer him to an article in the *Deutsche Rundschau* for January, 1904, p. 109, 'Shakespeare und die Anfänge der englischen Kolonialpolitik,' where all the passages in the plays are noted and criticised. I have already referred to this interest in the new American colonies, in 'Is it Shakespeare?' (1903), and since then my arguments have been much strengthened.

No wonder Ben Jonson should make Bacon such a traveller to the Indies and other outlandish

places ! No living *traveller* could equal him on paper.

I do not expect the orthodox will accept this explanation of mine for a moment. There are some people who will not *take in* Bacon on any grounds—just as others, Dr. Furnivall, *e.g.*, will not *give up* that ‘merry cheekt’ old gentleman of Stratford, Shakspere’s father, who had the famous interview with Sir John Mennes when that little toddler of two years or so went to Stratford, presumably accompanied by his nurse.

On this vexed but most interesting and important literary question, there are alas ! too many who will neither take in or give up anything. They cannot be convinced because they will not. Not even the comical fiasco of the ‘little toddler’ and the ‘merry cheekt’ John Shakspere shook Dr. Furnivall’s faith ; if the two year old and his nurse did not interview Shakspere’s father, no doubt someone else did.

Is a veteran to be nonplussed by a two year old ? Certainly not. No self-respecting man would allow it. See how Gifford treated Theobald years and years ago. Theobald had written in the margin of his copy of Ben’s play, against the passages I have just quoted, ‘*a flirt at Shakspeare.*’ On this Gifford remarks bitterly : ‘The charge is

too absurd for serious notice, or, indeed, for any notice at all.' All this occurred long before the pestilent Baconian heresy arose, but I think the maligned Theobald was much nearer the true mark than the contemptuous Gifford; for I hope I have shown, not only here, but in many other places, that Ben Jonson *did* attack the author of the Shakespeare plays, in spite of Gifford's rancorous and persistent denial of the fact.

CHAPTER XI

NEW EVIDENCE FROM BEN JONSON (*continued*)

I NOW come to another play which I believe supplies us with evidence, viz., Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster.'

How Bacon and Shakspeare were discovered in this play, and some less important characters as well, has been related in my former work.* Critics have not yet dislodged Ovid junior (Bacon) and Luscus (Shakspeare) from the arguments and inferences therein contained. I hold the case that Ovid junior is Bacon to be one of the clearest and most direct proofs that Baconians possess, and as I think I can corroborate it from Dekker's 'Satiromastix,' which was the direct answer to Ben's 'Poetaster,' it is worth while to do so. There are two passages.†

The first is where Sir Rees ap Vaughan lays

* 'Is it Shakespeare?' 1902, pp. 85-92, etc.

† Dekker's Works, vol. i., p. 252 and p. 262.

down the law for Horace (who stands for Ben Jonson on the hardest of foundations), and says, with the stage Welsh accent,—

‘Moreover, *inprimis* when a Knight, or Sentleman of worship, does give you his passe port to travaile in and out to his company, and gives you money for God’s sake ; I trust in Sesu you will swear (tooth and nayle) not to make scalde and wry mouth Jestes upon his Knighthood, will you not ?

‘HORACE. I never did by Parnassus.

‘TUCCA. Wut sweare by Parnassus and lye too, Doctor Doddipol ?’

The second passage is where Tucca addresses Horace thus :

‘Art not famous enough yet, my mad Horostratus, for killing a Player, but thou must eat men alive ? Thy friends ? Sirra, Wilde-man. Thy Patrons ? Thou anthropophagite. Thy Mæcenses ?’

Both these extracts refer, as I believe, to the ‘wry mouth Jestes’ made against Bacon as Ovid junior in ‘The Poetaster,’ and against Bacon and the courtiers in ‘Cynthia’s Revels,’ by Ben Jonson, who thus turned his devouring satire against that merry Ovidian Knight of the Helmet, who had also befriended him as a Mæcenas, along with Southampton and others, and had probably

helped to get Ben's first good play accepted for Shakspeare's company. 'The Poetaster' is also rather sneering towards the Stratford player, although in former days it was strenuously denied that Jonson ever expressed anything but good feeling for Shakspeare.

But such statements are not up to date now. I would also add that the fact of the 'Knight or Gentleman of worship' being able to give Jonson a 'passeport' to his company (of players?) rather corroborates my view that Bacon was so connected with a certain company of players that they were called 'Sir Oliver Owlet's men.'

In 1601 complaint was made to the authorities that the actors at the Curtain Theatre directed their speeches at persons in the audience, or of the City, and the Lords of the Privy Council issued their mandate to certain justices of the peace of Middlesex, May 10 of that year, reciting that 'Wee do understand that certain players,' etc., 'do represent upon the stage, in their interludes, the person of some gent of good desert and quality,' etc., requiring that the justices 'take Bonds of the Chiefest of these actors to answer their rashe and indiscreet dealing before us.'

That Bacon was represented upon the stage by Ben Jonson on several occasions, and especially in

his early plays and in 'The Poetaster,' which was partly excised by the authorities about this time, will soon be a plain matter of dramatic history, or ought to be. I therefore think that the 'gent of good desert and quality' referred to above might be Bacon, though the theatre was the Curtain, for I know of no other 'gent' about whom the authorities would take so much trouble; for though he was only plain Mr. Francis Bacon, he was a 'gent' who was by no means slow in urging his high-placed relatives and friends to defend him from attack. We know, when Coke attacked him in open court, how he wrote at once to his powerful Cecil relations, and I think he would do the same if Jonson, or any other dramatist, represented him in an unbecoming manner 'upon the stage.'

The word 'gent,' too, reminds us of the dialogue between Queen Elizabeth and Lambarde about the play of Richard II. The author is spoken of by Lambarde as a 'most adorned gent,' and, as I have said elsewhere, it is that word that excludes Essex and Hayward, and points to Bacon.

Moreover, the omissions or suppressions from the first printed copy, the quarto of 1602, lend great probability to Bacon's special interference there. For a long and important passage dealing with law and law terms, and aiming at Bacon's

Cheveril conscience and other peculiarities, is omitted altogether.

The word 'knight' as applied to the two Ovids, senior and junior, was struck out of the several places where it first appeared, and was heard of no more. 'Knight' or 'the merry Knight' seemed to be almost a familiar name for Bacon, and nearly all Jonson's masks for Bacon are knights—Sir Puntarvolo, Sir Valentine, Sir John Daw, Amorphus. But in the word *misprise*, which was kept out of the first quarto with much else, we get one of the strongest allusions to Bacon-Shakespeare. I will therefore consider more closely *misprise* and its compounds in Shakespeare. This is essentially and originally a legal word, hailing from the early days when the statutes were in Norman-French, and *mesprendre* and *mesprision* meant that a mistake, misapprehension, or false and inferior estimate, had been made. '*Mispriso*,' says Cope, 'cometh of the word *mespris*, which properly signifieth neglect or contempt; in legal understanding it signifieth when one knoweth of any treason or felony and concealeth it.'

It occurs with its derivatives a dozen times in the earlier plays, such as 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'As You Like It,' etc., but not

once in the later plays. Ben Jonson in his 'Poetaster' plainly aims at the Baconian use, and probably this jeer prevented further use of the word by Bacon.

Anyhow, except in one instance in 'Troilus and Cressida,' which appeared so very soon after 'The Poetaster' that it seems to me to have been partly written before Jonson's attack, all the twelve instances of *misprize* occur before the allusion was printed and came to Bacon's knowledge. This is how Jonson brings the word in. Ovid senior is bitterly complaining of Ovid junior's devotion to the Muses, and especially such wanton Muses as were connected with play-makers and love elegies, and says to Lupus,—

'Why, he cannot speak, he cannot think, out of poetry; he is bewitched with it.

'LUPUS. Come, do not misprize him.

OVID SENIOR. *Misprize!* ay, marry, I would have him use some such words now; they have some touch, some taste of the law. He should make himself a style out of these,' etc.

But whoever may have appealed to the authorities, and whether the theatre was the Curtain or not where Jonson's plays were produced, still, my contention cannot be set aside,

viz., that Bacon was the principal lawyer assailed in the Jonsonian plays of the dates 1598-1601. And we know for certain, in addition to this, that Bacon *threatened* Jonson with the terrors of the Higher Courts, for Jonson put this fact down in black and white in his epigram 'On Cheveril,' who is Francis Bacon without a doubt, as I have shown *acrostically* elsewhere.

‘ON CHEVERIL.

‘Cheveril cries out, my verses libels are,
And threatens the Star-Chamber and the bar.’

I may here add to ‘The Poetaster’ allusions recorded in my former book the following new ones,—

Ovid junior is called a ‘Grammaticaster.’ This is a word very applicable to Puttenham, and Jonson knew Puttenham to be Bacon, as I contend. He is also described as one famed for ‘sufficiencies.’ Why so, unless Jonson was thinking of the ‘deficiencies’ of which Bacon makes so much in his philosophical treatises? He is also called Callimachus (a poet who was overloaded with learning), young Phoebus, and lastly Phaeton (Bacon’s own signature to the ‘Florio’ sonnet). All these point out one man only.

‘THE SILENT WOMAN’ (1609).

This play gave me Sir Francis Bacon in the person of Sir John Daw. I brought this strong identity before the critics in my last book, and none of them has challenged it, for the good reason, as I hold, that it cannot be controverted.

This identity has been also strengthened lately. Readers of the *Times* will know that now it has been discovered by Professor Sonnenschein that Portia’s famous speech on Mercy came nearly word by word from Seneca’s ‘De Clementiâ.’ Now, Jonson in ‘The Silent Woman,’ Act II., Scene ii., flicks at Sir John Daw for borrowing from Seneca and Plutarch, and being ‘president’ of the ‘wits and braveries,’ and all that is said in this scene points so clearly to Bacon that I leave it for the candid reader to peruse *in toto*. I will say no more here, except that the British Museum copy of Florio’s Montaigne, for which over £100 was paid (as it contained a supposed autograph of Shakspeare), affords good evidence that the marginal annotator had read Seneca’s ‘De Clementiâ,’ for he detects Montaigne’s allusion to it, giving the true source in his manuscript note, viz., ‘Sen. Clementia, cap. 4.’ The writing of this is not unlike Bacon’s in the jottings we

have of his in the 'Promus.' Mr. F. P. Gervais, a barrister, has dealt with this 'Shakespeare's copy of Florio's Montaigne' in his work entitled 'Shakspere not Bacon': and if ever a work helped to prove the very opposite of that which its title promised, this is the book which heads the record.

But I must not conclude Ben Jonson's allusions without expressing my opinion that, of the many contemporaries of Francis Bacon who must have known the secret of the 'concealed poet,' it is Jonson who has left us the most numerous clues to the Baconian authorship, though, perhaps, none are quite so pointed and clear as those of Marston and Hall, described in my former book. They still hold good; but I have become better acquainted with Ben's allusions since then, and their number and importance cannot be long ignored.

I expressed my opinion that Ben had his tongue in his cheek in the famous Shakespeare eulogium in the First Folio of 1623, and I have since noticed that he played the same game with Michael Drayton in the prefatory part of Drayton's folio which came out in 1627.

It is too long to quote here, but it can be found in any edition of Jonson's works, in 'Underwoods,'

No. XVI., and it is worth reading carefully as a very clever piece of deception. In fact, it looks as if Ben was so pleased with his success in bamboozling the non-elect in 1623, that four years after he thought he would try his hand on another folio and another poet.

My confidence in my supposition has also been considerably increased lately by finding, to my great pleasure, that Dr. Garnett holds the same view of this curious composition that I do.

In his recent 'History of English Literature' (vol. ii., p. 255, n.), he says :—' His [*i.e.*, Jonson's] professed eulogium on Drayton appears to us a thinly disguised satire.'

The fact seems to be that there was about the same friendship between Jonson and Drayton that there was between Jonson and Shakspeare, and Ben treated both in the same tricky way. But he was able to complicate matters and deceive his readers more easily in Shakspeare's case, for he had two personages to work upon, or puppets to pull, in whatever way it pleased his ingenuity to contrive.

One man was alive, and one was dead. One Jonson was pleased to call 'my beloved Master William Shakespeare' and 'my Shakespeare . . . a monument without a tomb'; the other seems

to be the Stratford player. At first glance through the lines the impression arises that the Stratford Shakspeare fills the whole canvas; but even as long ago as Dryden's time there were some, and Dryden was their exponent, who thought this Shakespearian eulogy somewhat scant and invidious. In fact, its peculiar structure was clearly not unobserved by Dryden's good eye. It began so strangely; Jonson wished to 'draw no envy.' Now, that was applicable to the living only, and was one thing which Bacon especially dreaded. And then, for the other that was dead, Jonson's great praise was bestowed on him when 'his socks were on,' or when his buskins were shaking a stage under his dramatic gestures and tread. *Then* this other fellow might indeed surpass 'comparison of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome sent forth.' Of course he could, for he would then be declaiming the wondrous rhetoric and poetry of him to whom Jonson had elsewhere ('Discoveries') given exactly the same praise in the same words; and that 'alchemist of eloquence' was none other than Lord Chancellor Egerton's successor, the illustrious Francis Bacon!

How is it that people of good mental ability seem nowadays, at least in this literary matter,

to have eyes and see not, to have ears and hear not? We hear some critics say that Shakespeare *had no learning*, when it is as plain as possible that, 'without learning, he cannot be read with any degree of understanding or taste,' as Prebendary Upton justly remarks. We hear another critic—and he a very cocksure one—declare that Shakspeare of Stratford was well acquainted with the Greek tragedians, and came up from Stratford, leaving his newly born twins behind him, and carrying 'Venus and Adonis' in his pocket, to make his fortune in London. And what is still more strange, both these opposing sections of the orthodox party agree that after a few years this Warwickshire youth, who was not even a 'squire of low degree,' had so risen in the social estimation of the aristocracy that he felt himself privileged to ask one of the highest young noblemen in the land, whom he addressed as 'My Rose' and 'Dear my love,' to find a wife and marry without delay, or, as he puts it in the tenth of the seventeen persistent procreation sonnets to this 'beauteous niggard,' *Make thee another self for love of me.*

But let us get back to Ben Jonson, who was a very different kind of critic from Mr. Churton Collins, and a much better judge of Bacon than

Mr. Sidney Lee, who in such matters could hardly be able to call upon his own experience or taste to decide which conjectures were the rasher ones, and which were simply gammon.

Jonson's plays—I mean the early ones, and his 'Poetaster' especially—should be read from beginning to end, so that the delicate (and indelicate) allusions be not passed over unobserved. As a general result, I think it will be found that Ben Jonson knew both Bacon and Shakspeare very well—the later socially and in a somewhat friendly spirit throughout his acquaintance.

Jonson and Shakspeare appear to me to have enjoyed a long acquaintance not embittered by any, or hardly any, of those quarrels and scathing invectives which seem to have arisen sooner or later with all Jonson's comrades, not even excepting Chapman, of whom he often spoke so highly.

Jonson, it is true, made *Tucca* indulge in a bit of satire on the actors who wanted to be 'blazoned' and 'tricked' by the heralds, and the same character used rather abusive and contemptuous words to *Luscus* or Shakspeare in 'The Poetaster'; but in the whole *Poetomachia* Shakspeare the actor escapes with hardly a scratch.

But Bacon, we find, received a very different treatment until the time (*circa* 1619) when Jonson entered into the service of his then 'beloved master, Dominus Verulamius.' Jonson had, I think, early private grudges against Bacon for the bricklayer allusions in Puttenham's 'Arte of English Poesie' (extra pages); and besides that, Jonson belonged to the *classical* school of dramatists, and depreciated the beautiful *romantic* fancies of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and the disregard of the Aristotelian unities which some of the Shakespeare plays gloried in. He also disliked Bacon as a lawyer and as influential in the Star Chamber proceedings against men who were too independent in their speech and writings, among which men Jonson was certainly included, and had suffered for it. But it is enough for our purpose if we show that Jonson knew both Bacon and Shakspeare very well, distinguished between them, knew their secret, and eventually discovered that Francis Bacon, his former despised enemy, had reached the highest pinnacle of literary fame, or, as he said in his own words, 'he [*i.e.*, Bacon] may be named and stand as the mark and ἀκμή of our language.'

This is a true saying and worthy of all acceptance, and goes a long way in proving that the

Baconian theory of the immortal plays and poems is the correct one.

The Jonsonian allusions to Bacon are all concealed under other names. But in one instance the cautious Ben combines the indirect allusions with a direct one, and, in my opinion, 'names' Bacon pretty plainly. This is in one of the two epigrams he wrote on Cheveril the lawyer. I cited them both in my former volume as alluding to Bacon, but since then the very name of Francis Bacon has been revealed as contained in one of the epigrams. I will therefore reproduce it for my present readers.

'EPIGRAM XXXVII.

'*On Cheveril the Lawyer.*

'NO CAuse nor chent fat, will Cheveril leese,
But as they come on both sides he takes fees,
And pleaseth both ; for while he melts his grease
FoR this ; that wins for whom he holds his peace.'

Here we may read FRA. BACON by using the capitals at the head of each line of the epigram, and by beginning at the last line and reading upwards. The letter O at the second place of the last line is a null, and therefore *non legitur*. I hold this to be an evident *intentional* cipher allusion, and cannot accept the plea that it is mere

chance or coincidence. The odds against such an allocation of letters being unintentional are enormous ; and besides this, it is clear that a lawyer is meant, and also one who had threatened Jonson with Star Chamber processes for libel, as we see from the other epigram on Cheveril (LIV.). Now, Bacon suits both these requisites, and when we find his name written into the epigram as above, it amounts to nearly a certainty that he was the man meant.

I had not noticed this letter cryptogram when I quoted the epigram in 'Is it Shakespeare?' p. 92, but a contributor to *Baconiana* tried afterwards to get Bacon's name in a rather mixed up way from the pure acrostic of the epigram and the first letters of the title 'On Cheveril the Lawyer,' and I at once saw FRA. BACON much more clearly from the epigram alone. I hold this and the B. FRA. or FRA. B. of 'Lucrece' to be unimpeachable.

All the orthodox Shakespearians who have recently been bold enough to defend the Stratfordian authorship in public print have rested their case with supreme confidence on what they call the 'undeniable contemporary evidence' for Shakespeare the actor being the author of the plays and poems. This is their great card, and

their possession of it in their hands insures them the game. So they think, from their great champion Sidney Lee, who wrote to that effect to the *Times*, January 8, 1902, right down to C. Y. C. Dawbarn, M.A., who addressed the Liverpool Philomathic Society not many months ago (1904). The last gentleman puts the matter as plainly as it can be put. He says 'the great, the overwhelming argument on the Shakespearian side is the testimony of his contemporaries,' and he especially depends on Jonson, and so, indeed, do they all.

However, Ben Jonson will prove to be a broken reed that pierces the hands of them that rest on it. I claim to have shown that Jonson knew Bacon and Shakspeare well enough — especially Bacon — and that Luscus, and Ovid junior, and Sir John Daw, and Cheveril the Lawyer, have been identified by me in 'Is it Shakespeare?' and that the evidence is so clear that no critic has ventured even to try to upset it. In fact, I have shown that Ben Jonson, Joseph Hall (the famous Bishop and critic), and John Marston, the lynx-eyed satirist, all three well knew that the actor from Stratford was not the new poet, but another man who wished to be unknown, but who nevertheless had 'showed his head' and his hieroglyphic to

such as were keen eyed enough to see it. No one dare absolutely name him, for young Francis Bacon had powerful friends, and had influence with the members of the Star Chamber and other aristocrats; but Marston had the courage to name his motto in an indirect and inconclusive way.

And now I hope I have shown that Jonson was constantly bringing the plays of Shakespeare, and through them Bacon, upon the London stage in the years 1598-1602, both in the characters of Valentine and Puntarvolo especially, and in other more composite characters he also was obliquely (and so more safely) aiming at the same great poetical genius and alchemist of words.

So the chief argument of the orthodox Shakespearians now disappears altogether.

Before finally leaving Ben Jonson, I feel I ought to say a few more words in his defence against the oft-expressed opinion that Ben showed 'malignity' against the Stratford actor. My own view is that there is comparatively very little allusion to the actor manager throughout Jonson's works. The fact seems to be that Jonson never thought *him* to be a rival at all, or even to be a personage of much importance. I take Luscus in 'The Poetaster' to be one of the few allusions, and there he is called 'good ignorance' and a wearer

of the buskins, and is told to get the horses ready and not stand 'prating,' and that if he must talk he should 'talk to tapsters and ostlers,' for they were in his 'element.'

I can find but little evidence in the 'Poetomachia,' *v. p.* 128, that Shakspeare incurred Jonson's enmity, but the little there is will be noticed in the chapter on 'The True Shakspeare.' It is mainly connected with Corporal Thym and his 'humours.'

Jonson administered severe castigation to Marston, Dekker and others; but as for Shakspeare, it seems most probable that he was the very man whom Jonson was sorry for, and excused as being brought into the controversy against his own wish.

There remain, of course, Ben's epigram 'On Poet Ape' and his 'De Shakespeare Nostrat.' in his discourses. But the first only makes a strong (and very likely a true) charge of plagiarism and of buying reversions of old plays, without any special bitterness or enmity, and the second is, for Ben, unusually favourable.

This much, however, is clear, that Jonson attacked Bacon both as a writer of plays and poems (Ovid junior and Sir John Daw), and as a lawyer (Cheveril, *v. p.* 170, etc.), and showed plainly that in the earlier part of his career

he did not like Bacon either in one character or the other.

Jonson did not like the Chronicle Plays of York and Lancaster, and all the noise and guns and stage thunder that accompanied them. He did not like such plays as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' or 'The Tempest,' beautiful as they have seemed to more recent critics; he scoffed both at their art and at their supernatural and hobgoblin accessories. Great critic as Jonson was in many respects, this strange fact remains, that he was quite unable to appreciate these finest examples of the romantic drama that the world has ever seen.

Monsters, and fairies, and spirits of the air, and the manifold transgressions of the unities of the classical drama, offended Jonson, whose mind was saturated with a classicism and an art which were totally alien to such romantic conceptions. I suppose this was what he meant when he told Drummond that 'Shakspeare wanted art.' Jonson's view reminds me strongly of Gabriel Harvey's warning criticism on a much earlier occasion (1579-80); when referring to some 'elvish' composition which had been subjected to his criticism, he noticed the romantic element in it, and seriously called the author's attention to it, lest it

should turn out that ‘Hobgoblin runne away with the Garland from Apollo.’

From Drummond’s account of the conversations of Ben Jonson we learn that ‘he wrote all his first in prose, for so his Master Cambden had learned him.’ We have excellent examples of Ben Jonson’s unusual method in ‘The Staple of News,’ iii., 1 and 2, compared with ‘Discoveries,’ iii. 407, where the blank verse of the former repeats the prose of the latter almost verbatim.

These examples, which carry conviction to the most prejudiced mind, have, curiously enough, only lately been noticed, although they have been in print from Jonson’s time. Like most of the recent discoveries, they tend more in the direction of Gray’s Inn than of Stratford-on-Avon. For Bacon was well acquainted with Camden, and could hardly be ignorant of Camden’s peculiar view of constructing poetry, more especially when we remember him as Puttenham, an art-master of the subject in all its branches.

Now, the author of the immortal plays follows out Camden’s advice in a more remarkable and persistent way than any other contemporary, and far more so than Ben Jonson, whose *two instances* referred to (though clear and certain) are nearly

all that occur. The manner in which the so-called Chronicle Plays of Shakespeare are built up, often word by word, from the 'Chronicles' of Holinshed and others is unparalleled among all the Elizabethan dramatists. Their author worked according to Camden's advice, if any author ever did. But was Shakspeare on friendly or social terms with Camden? There is not a scrap of evidence favouring such a supposition. Was Bacon Camden's friend? Certainly, and they criticised each other's literary productions as well.

CHAPTER XII

‘THE SWAN OF AVON’

THIS expression, used by Ben Jonson in his famous address in the First Folio, has done more to preserve the faith of the ordinary Shakespearian than any other proof or piece of evidence in existence. There is no doubt that Ben was a splendid mystery monger, and before I discovered how he kept his tongue most artfully in his cheek in other instances, I certainly took him seriously and historically in ‘the Swan of Avon’ passage.

But now I think there is much more in that term ‘swan’ than meets the eye or the ear, and whatever Jonson might mean by such a term, it is quite clear that the Stratford actor was a ‘swan like scholler’ in one sense ; for Shakespeare’s Folio, where ‘the Swan of Avon’ is first heard of, has certainly preserved from Lethe’s lake, and delivered to immortality, many precious pages which otherwise would have decayed by the

remorseless process of swift paced Time, or been swallowed up for ever in the greedy lake of Lethe.

This swan story appears in Ariosto, and there is a fine illustration of swans rescuing some great names from the greedy current, and carrying them to the temple of immortal fame, which appears among the engravings of Harington’s English translation, made in the sixteenth century’s last decennium, and there is no doubt that this swan story was well known to poets and literary men of that time. Studioso, in ‘The Returne from Parnassus,’ refers to it thus,—

‘Fond world that nere thinkes on that aged man,
That *Ariostoes* old swift paced man,
Whose name is Tyme, who never lins* to run,
Loaden with bundles of decayed names,
The which in Lethes lake he doth intombe,
Save only those which swanlike schollers take,
And do deliver from that greedy lake.’

Can it really be that Jonson, who would certainly know Ariosto’s allusion, looked at Shakespeare as a ‘swan like scholler’ who in a certain sense had delivered a greater genius than himself from Lethe’s lake, and *therefore* used his well known expression, ‘Sweet Swan of Avon’? I referred to this in my appendix to ‘Is it Shakespeare?’ and gave there the Baconian passages as well;

* Ceases.

but at that time I only considered it a freak or curio, not worthy of serious notice in the book, and therefore relegated it to the company of the cranks. I have a better opinion of it now, since I have read the passage above about 'swan like schollers,' but of course it is a matter of pure conjecture. I do not wish to deny that the Baconian authorship of the plays is more *conjectural* than is the Baconian authorship of the poems and 'Sonnets,' and I also think it may be taken for granted that *several* writers had part and lot in the first folio, whereas *one* man was responsible for 'Venus and Adonis,' 'Lucrece,' and the 'Sonnets,' while Shakspere of Stratford had nothing to do with these. But even with the *conjectural* questions connecting Bacon with the plays of Shakespeare, it is surprising how the more one reads in scarce or obscure Elizabethan books, the more does fresh evidence seem to crop up. And this evidence always tends in the Baconian direction. That is my experience of it; and this personal fact, taken in connection with that other fact, that no Baconian convert has ever been known to desert his acquired convictions—these facts become a tower of strength to the heretic when the great array of all the orthodox talents would sweep him off the field in contempt.

The way Labeo gradually transformed himself into Bacon in Hall’s satires and in Marston’s sequel is only one case among many, and even in the much more dubious point of ‘the Swan of Avon’ the same may be said ; there is always a tendency or hint in the Baconian direction.

For example, when I was orthodox I thought Jonson’s address to ‘the Swan’ to be the one convincing argument that no Baconian could possibly get over. After that, going more carefully into the history of the production of the First Folio of 1623, its portrait, its editors, its preliminary assertions, and other suspicious circumstances connected with it, I began to attach less weight to Ben Jonson’s laudations. I dared even to pass a jest upon the sacred Swan. Then I came across Sir John Harington’s folio translation of Ariosto, so well known to Elizabethans, and so little known to us ; there I both saw the swans and heard of their peculiar functions from the words of Ariosto himself. Here was a leap in the Baconian direction indeed, but it was by no means the last leap, for a few weeks afterwards these same swans made their appearance in ‘The Returne from Parnassus,’ and another luminous phrase, ‘swan like schollers,’ appeared, bringing it still nearer to the hateful Bacon. And now, last

of all, having searched well and arrived at the conviction that little or nothing more would be heard of these swans, I went to Oxford one day, and being in the Bodleian, I thought it would be a good opportunity to read John Weever's epigrams of 1599, a book so scarce that the Bodleian is the only public library that has a copy. I was disappointed at first, for I did not come across anything connected with Shakespeare except the address to him, which I already knew well from its being included in Ingleby's 'Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse.' But towards the middle of the little rarity I found the swans, or something very like them; they were swans of Thames this time. They appeared in an epigram addressed to Edward Alleyn, the famous player and tragedian, and were headed,—

‘IN ED. ALLEN.

‘Rome had her Roscius and her Theater,
Her Terence, Plautus, Ennius and Meander;
The first to Allen Phœbus did transfer,
The next Thames Swans receiv'd fore he coulde
land her.
Of both more worthy we by Phœbus doome
Then t' Allen Roscius yeeld, to London Rome.’

The interpretation or paraphrase which I offer, with due deference to critics more skilled in Elizabethan epigrams than myself, is as follows ;—

Rome had her Roscius and her ‘Theater,’ the first her most famous Actor, the second her Dramatic Stage, which was supplied by the famous authors Terence, Plautus, Ennius, and Menander (Meander being, I suppose, a misprint). The first (*i.e.*, Roscius) Phœbus Apollo did transfer to Allen, and made *him* the Roscius of the Elizabethan actors. The next (*i.e.*, the ‘Theater’ and those who graced it by their plays), before Phœbus could land her or institute her in London, was received by the swans that haunt the banks of Thames—*i.e.*, those swans (players) that are wont to carry in their mouths the immortality placed there by the ever living words of the poet playwrights, the true sons of Phœbus, who are often not known, or landed or introduced to public esteem, because the swans of Thames, or the actors, bear away their immortal lines and their names, and carry them as did Ariosto’s swans, to the temple of undying fame. But we, continues Weever, are ‘of both more worthy,’ and that by Phœbus’ decree, who has given us the pre-eminence both in acting and in the Dramatic Muse. So Roscius must yield to Alleyn, and Rome must yield to London.

To ‘repose eternity in the mouth of a player’ is an expression of Nash’s address before ‘Menaphon’

as early as 1589, and as Ariosto's swans held eternity of fame in their mouths also, it is not hard to see how actors would metaphorically be called 'swans,' and London actors 'Thames swans.' And this seems to be what Weever is thinking of. But *whose* immortal lines were being carried in the mouths of the swan like players about the years 1595-1599 when Weever wrote? Who was the great representative of the London Theatre then, as Terence, Plautus, Ennius, and Menander, were of the Roman 'Theater' in her palmy days?

Why, surely that great poet and dramatic author known by the appellation of honey tongued or mellifluous or sweet 'Mr. Shakespeare,' the great playwright of the day, the author of 'Romea-Richard' and 'more whose names I know not,' to use the very words of Weever in his ode 'Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare,' which comes just before the one I am discussing.

But how could the 'Thames Swan,' Will Shakspeare the actor, carry away William Shakespeare the author of 'Romea-Richard' in his mouth?

These swans always bore *some other* name to immortality, not their own. So Weever would be inconsistent with the swan theory if he thought that the 'Honie-tong'd Shakespeare,'

the author of ‘Romea-Richard,’ was one of the ‘Thames swans,’ or actors, whom he seems to refer to in his very next epigram. But if we read carefully Weever’s first epigram, and everyone can do that, in Ingleby’s ‘Centurie of Prayse,’ we shall not find a single hint that the William Shakespeare addressed therein is an actor or swan. On the contrary, every line speaks plainly that this ‘Honie-tong’d Shakespeare’ was a son of Phœbus Apollo, and of none other, and concludes by begging him to

‘Go wo thy Muse more Nymphish brood beget them.’

I therefore take it as highly probable that Weever, when he uses the words ‘swans of Thames,’ refers to the actors of the Globe and other theatres of the riverside, who carried in their mouths the immortal renown of the chief playwright and poet of those days, and that Weever calls them ‘swans’ because of the fine Ariosto episode, which was common literary knowledge at that date. And the same reason would account for Jonson’s term ‘Swan of Avon,’ which Swan also is spoken of by him as taking ‘flights upon the banks of Thames.’

Ariosto specially mentions the swans as being ‘two’ only, and in the explanation of this allegory

in the beginning of the thirty-fifth book of his 'Orlando Furioso' he shows us that the swans correspond to the historians and poets, who alone can take up the name of a man and make his fame immortal. Now, if Bacon was to become immortal through poetry, it could only be so through Shakespeare, the Swan who held Bacon's medal or name in his mouth, and had flown away with it; so 'Swan of Avon' was a very appropriate name for Shakespeare to be addressed by, and quite in keeping with the rest of Jonson's mystifying address. As Harington's Ariosto (1591) is not a book easy of access nowadays, I will quote enough of it here to make the swan allegory easier to understand.

Ariosto's old man 'who figureth time,' and who casts into the waters of Lethe such heaps of names, is described in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth books of the 'Orlando Furioso,'—

'Hardly in ev'rie thousand one was found,
That was not in the gulfe quite lost and drown'd.
Yet all about great store of birds there flew,
As vultures, carrion crowes, and chattering pies,
And many more of sundrie kinds and hew,
Making lewd harmonie with their loud cries.
These birds tried . . .
To save some names but find themselves too weake.

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- ‘ Only two Swanns sustaind so great a payse
In spite of him that sought them all to drown,
These two do still take up whose names they list,
And bare them safe away, and never mist.
- ‘ Somtime all under the foule lake they dived
And took up some that were with water covered,
And those that seemd condemned they reprievd,
And often as about the banke they hovered,
They caught them, ere they to the stream arrived.
Then went they with the names they had recovered,
Up to a hill that stood the water nye,
On which a stately Church was built on hye.
- ‘ This place is sacred to immortal fame,
And evermore a nymph stands at the gate
And took the names wherewith the two swanns came
(Whether they early come or whether late).
Then all about the Church she hangd the same,
Before that sacred image in such rate
As they might then well be assur’d for ever,
Spite of that wretch, in saftie to presever.
- ‘ But as the swanns that here still flying are,
With written names unto that sacred port,
So there Historians learn’d and Poets rare,
Preserve them in cleare fame and good report;
O happie Princes whose foresight and care,
Can win the love of writers in such sort,
As Cesar did, so as you need not dread,
The lake of Lethe after you are dead.’

CHAPTER XIII

THE 'SONNETS'

SOMETIMES, when reading the Shake-speare 'Sonnets' with renewed and increasing delight at the Philosophic Muse who has so wonderfully constructed them, an intense feeling of regret surges up at the thought of the similar sonnets that *might have* adorned and glorified the Victorian age as much as, if not more than, the originals adorned the age of Elizabeth.

If Mr. Herbert Spencer had only been endowed with lofty poesy, and could have loved *his* 'woman coloured ill,' perhaps even Shakespeare would have been excelled.

For what a 'woman' his 'Dark Lady' was, full of emotion and full of intellect as hardly ever one had been before. Like unto Shake-speare's mistress, she was no beauty ; but, alas ! unlike to Shake-speare, Mr. Spencer could not be love's slave to a plain woman. What sonnets we should have had

in the nineteenth century if only Herbert Spencer could have been seized with the poet's frenzy, and had been able to make *his* 'Dark Lady, George Eliot, the master-mistress of his passion. But, alas! she was too ugly, and we have this lamentable confession recorded by himself. 'Physical beauty is a *sine quâ non* with me, as was once unhappily proved where the intellectual traits and the emotional traits were of the highest.' And yet this autocrat of modern philosophers and this unapproachable Sibyl of modern romance stood by the piano together and sang. Surely they were in unison then; and Spencer, when telling us of this, remarks that her voice was low,—kept purposely lower than she could have raised it,—a charming thing in any woman. But their unison seemed to end when the song ended, and what the world has lost by Spencer's unfortunate revulsion of feeling when he gazed upon the Sibyl's portentous face can never be truly reckoned up. To take one item only, what marvellous children such a pair would have begotten!

Oh that it had been possible for Mr. Herbert Spencer to read with assent and enthusiasm the early 'Procreation Sonnets' of William Shakespeare of Gray's Inn! Oh that he could have, without any abatement of present fever, gone at

once to his companion singer, George Eliot, and asked her to take him as he was and name the day. And oh that she,—of course in a sweet, low voice,—had uttered the fateful maiden's 'Yes,' and thus at least given him the chance to procure or beget 'that eternitie promised by our ever living poet.'

Dr. F. C. Furnivall took great interest in Shakespeare's 'Dark Lady,' and went down to Lady Newdegate's in company with Mr. Tyler, to see if they two could obtain any light on the subject by a thorough examination of the existing portraits in the possession of the descendants of the Fitton family. They believed that Mary Fitton made a complete capture of old Sir William Knollys, but for some unexplained reason Dr. Furnivall will not accept the suggestion of Mr. Archer, that old Sir William was the "Will" in overplus' of Sonnet CXXXV. His remark is :*

'No doubt Shakspeare would have enjoyed calling an amorous old billy-goat "Will in overplus," but the epithet is too doubtful to base any theory on.'

The Doctor accepts Herbert fully for the second

* *The Theatre*, December 1, 1897.

division of the 'Sonnets' (CXXVII. *ad fin.*), and defends his position by saying that,—

'As to Shakspeare's love for Herbert giving "the lie" to his professions of devotion in the "Adonis" and "Lucrece" to Southampton, a great deal may have happened in four years. There is no evidence that Southampton kept up his alliance with Shakspeare after 1594. He had plenty of other folk and work to look after, and we can't tie an enthusiastic young poet down to his dedications for his whole life. If Shakspeare hadn't turned up Southampton before that nobleman joined in Essex's rebellion in 1601, he surely did so then.'

The idea of Shakspeare turning up Southampton (as the Doctor elegantly phrases it) is surely rather a ridiculous one. But Shakespearians following out their theory are bound to become ridiculous.

Shakespearians have always some difficulty in explaining how a person in Shakespeare's position could become in any way intimate, or even on friendly terms, with Southampton, who was one of the highest and richest aristocrats in the whole kingdom.

Knight especially, in his biography of William Shakespeare, seems struck with surprise at the free and independent manner in which such a

noble lord is addressed by the player in the two poems which he dedicated to him.

‘Both the dedications,’ says Knight, ‘and especially that of “Lucrece,” are conceived in a modest and a manly spirit, entirely different from the ordinary language of literary adulation.’

And further on he says,—

‘There is evidence in that dedication [‘Lucrece’] of a higher sort of intercourse between the two minds than consists with any forced adulation of any kind, and especially with any extravagant compliments to the learning and to the abilities of a superior in rank.’

Also the curious fact is noticed that Shakespeare, in an age when all professional writers were constantly addressing flattering and obsequious dedications to their patrons and Mæcenases, never wrote dedications to any person whatever, except these two, and was not himself the recipient of such addresses or dedications from personal friends as we might expect in the case of so distinguished a genius, and, stranger still, died in 1616 at Stratford with scarce any voice of praise or lament in those days when funeral verses were almost considered to be a part of the obsequies. Shakespearians cannot explain this,

and never will so long as they try to make Shakspeare suit the difficulty. Try Bacon, and all becomes very plain.

I have another argument in favour of the Baconian authorship of the 'Sonnets,' which I believe no one has yet brought forward. It has to do with Ronsard, Jodelle, and the French 'Pléiade.' I think we may justly assume that Alleyn, and Burbage, and Heminge, and Condell, were men of the same stamp and standard of culture as their fellow actor Shakspeare. Can we imagine them writing deep brained sonnets, infused with the fashionable Neo Platonic theories, and framed on the learned and cultured structure which was common to Ronsard, Jodelle, and other famous French poets of the period, and was derived mainly from Petrarch, and other less known Italian predecessors? Can we imagine this, I say, when, in addition to their prosaic, money making life, they no more than Shakspeare, had any knowledge of either of the two languages in which these poems of the higher classes were written?

Ronsard began with sonnets and love-songs, and was criticised unfavourably by some of his contemporaries for using long new words which

he had formed from the classic use, and was also noted for his attempts to bring again into use obsolete words belonging to the French of an earlier age.

We see Puttenham and Shakespeare doing the very same thing. In Puttenham's 'Partheniades' especially there seems to be the 'form and pressure' of Ronsard.

So much for poetical influence on Bacon. As for dramatic influence, it is a curious coincidence, if nothing else, that Jodelle, the friend of Ronsard, and originator of classical French drama, chose Cleopatra and Dido for the heroines of his first plays. However, Jodelle's tragedies have a long chorus here and there, after the Greek style, and are thoroughly classical in form, and even in dialogue. Shakespeare, fortunately, did not follow in Jodelle's steps, which were eventually to lead to Racine, but, at least so far as heroines were concerned, chose the glorious, inimitable, immortal style of the romantic rather than the classical school, and gave us certainly Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, Desdemona, and perhaps Dido.

'Les Œuvres et Meslanges Poétiques D'Estienne Jodelle' (1574) had a preface on poetry by Charles de la Mothe, and it begins ;—

'Nos vieux Gaulois faisoient grand cas de la Poesie, et entretenoyent les Poètes non pour la volupté, mais pour la police et pour l'erudition, les estimans les vrais et premiers Philosophes.'

Jodelle was the real founder of the French classical and historical drama, and his play of 'Cleopatra' (1552), acted before the King, may be taken as the first step away from the miracle plays and moralities of earlier times. His sonnets were numerous, and he also wrote love songs and marriage odes, but his most peculiar composition was his 'Contr'amours,' or sonnets of *dispraise* to his mistress—'odious-amorous sonnets' as they may be called. Francis Bacon gives us one or two in the Shakespeare 'Sonnets,' and there is one by Shepheard Tony (possibly Antony Bacon) in 'England's Helicon.'

Jodelle, Ronsard, Du Bellay, and others of 'La Pléiade,' could hardly fail to have an influence on such a clever young literary genius as Francis Bacon when he was spending part of the years 1577-1579 in France. Indeed, there are many traces of this influence to be found in Puttenham's 'Arte of English Poesie' and in the Shakespeare works.

Puttenham refers to Ronsard more than once, and begins his work on poetry by saying that the

poets were the first philosophers and politicians, which is the very thing referred to in the prefatory account of French poetry which is placed as a preface to Jodelle's collected works in 1574, only about three years before Bacon came to France.

Besides the poetic influence on young Bacon that Ronsard, the acknowledged master of French poetry, would naturally possess, there is a curious parallelism in their early careers. Ronsard was the older man, and so Bacon would be able to look back on Ronsard's career, and might thereby gain encouragement or warning with regard to his own prospects in poetry or elsewhere.

Ronsard when not more than sixteen was sent on a mission to Flanders and Scotland by the Duke of Orleans, who had a high opinion of him as the best of his pages.

Bacon when a little older was sent on an important mission to Queen Elizabeth, conducted the business well, and was probably engaged in other political missions afterwards.

Ronsard from his eighteenth to his twenty-fifth year devoted himself to almost constant study, first of the classical authors and of the wide range of general knowledge which must be acquired so as to do them justice and catch their spirit, and then he determined, when about twenty-six years

old, to revive the poetry of his own country and place it on a firm classical foundation.

Now, these years of Bacon's life (eighteen to twenty-six) were spent in almost exactly the same way ; and if, as I think, Bacon wrote Puttenham's 'Arte of English Poesie' about the year 1587, then he also would be twenty-six, as Ronsard was, and the parallel would be strikingly close.

It was Meres, in 1598, who first mentioned Shakespeare's 'sugred Sonnets' among his private friends. But who are known to be the actor's 'private friends' in 1598 or earlier? Why, Burbage, Heminge, Condell, Henslowe the comic speller, and, generally speaking, the actors connected with his own company. If these were the persons among whom the 'Sonnets' were circulated in manuscript from their author and private friend, the actor from Stratford, they would not form a very appreciative circle. Alleyn, the famous actor, might also be a private friend and a privileged member of the circle ; but, as he is the only person we know for certain to have bought a copy when they came forth to the world, the inference is that he had not read them nor received them, otherwise he would not have been in such a hurry to buy them directly they were for sale. Moreover, they were Shakespeare's 'Sonnets,'

so called in largest of type on the title-page, and it is well known that, among the many ways the actor and his family had of spelling their own name, they never spelled it in the form given in the 'Sonnets' and poems, and never once used a hyphen in deeds or documents during all the centuries of their existence as a family.

How vastly improbable all these curious details make it for the actor to be author of either the 'Sonnets' or the poems, while at the same time there is not a single detail among them all which does not easily lend itself to the theory that Bacon was the real Shakespeare.

I have just noticed the absurdity of the Shakespeare 'Sonnets' being circulated among the Stratford player's 'private friends,' who, as far as we can judge, would be quite unable to appreciate the peculiar kind of sugar they contained.

Now, Meres, who is our authority for this, is certainly worthy of credit, for he was evidently well acquainted with Shakespeare's productions in 1598, and tells us more about them than all his contemporaries put together. But did Meres know the Stratford man, or did he mention him *as such*? There is not the smallest scrap of evidence that he did. In fact, Meres was not referring to Shakspere the actor, but to Shakespeare the aristocrat, who signed the dedications

of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' and 'showed his head' in the latter.

I have always had a suspicion in this direction, but it is only recently that I have obtained what seems a good piece of corroboration. It turns out, I find now, that Meres was the brother-in-law of Florio, and therefore naturally belonged to the Bacon-Southampton circle, and would know well enough who wrote the fine 'Florio Sonnet,'* and that he was a gentleman, a friend of Florio, and one 'that loved better to be a poet than to be counted so.' In fact, Meres would know that Bacon was the Phaethon who signed this. So there is every probability that among the private friends of Phaethon-Shakespeare-Bacon who were privileged to know somewhat of the 'sugred Sonnets' Meres was one.

I treated the 'Sonnets' at considerable length in 'Is it Shakespeare?' and I have nothing of importance to add to what I said then, nor have the critics adduced anything to make me alter my general statements and inferences. I should have said on p. 184 that Sidney *generally* followed the Italian model instead of *always* followed it; but this slip is not a very important one, and I still hold that my evidence connecting Bacon with the

* Cf. 'Is it Shakespeare?' p. 183, where this fine Baconian sonnet is quoted in full.

authorship of the 'Sonnets' and other poems hitherto attributed to Shakspeare is the strongest evidence before the public for the Baconian theory, because it is *positive* evidence for Bacon's authorship of these, while the evidence generally adduced, with the exception of the Baconian parallelisms, is chiefly of a *negative* character, with the object of showing that the Shakspeare from Stratford could not have written the plays. This is a much less convincing line to take, for the orthodox hold that Shakspeare's receptive genius was equal to anything he tried his hand upon in the world of poetry and drama. Such a loose assertion is hard to disprove to their satisfaction.

Next take that fine sonnet,—

'If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lovest the one and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense ;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.
Thou lovest to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes :
And I, in deep delight, am chiefly drown'd
When as himself to singing he betakes.
One God is God of both as poets feign ;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.'

How anyone can suppose this sonnet to have been written by Will Shakspeare of Stratford is a marvel to me. The reference to Dowland, the fashionable lute player and maestro for Court gallants and fair Maids of Honour and other amorists of high Elizabethan society, points out the sonneteer as being a gentleman of very different social rank and manners from the shrewd, money making actor-manager Shakspeare. This gentleman and courtly minded poet was, as we see, as equally privileged to listen to Dowland's voice 'in deep delight' as the lady of his love was privileged to enjoy the results of the artist's 'heavenly touch upon the lute.'

The sonnet gives not the slightest hint of any social inequality between these votaries of music and song. Indeed, the last line strikes me as affording excellent evidence for the good social position of the man, though I believe no one has noticed it.

'One knight loves both.' What can this mean, unless the writer of the line refers to himself as a knight who loves 'both,'—*i.e.*, poetry and singing?

Now, Shakspeare was certainly never a knight, even if he obtained the privilege of becoming the son of John Shakspeare of Stratford, Gentle-

man. So *he* did not compose this elegant piece.

How about Francis Bacon? Was he a knight at this date (1599)? No, he was not. He was not dubbed knight by the royal sword till King James came to the throne. Therefore Bacon did not write this line or this sonnet.

Thank goodness! says my orthodox reader; at least, we are not going to have any Baconian nonsense here! Do not be too sure of that! Our great 'concealed poet' had many an artful dodge, and left his mark and showed his head in various skilful ways. He *was* a Knight, and a merry Knight too; he was a Knight of the Helmet, and to those in the swim of Royal and Inns of Court Devices and Interludes Mr. Francis Bacon was doubtless as well known for being a capable manager of such 'society tricks,' and had as good a reputation then, and perhaps as suitable a *nom de guerre*, as ever the best known manager of cleverly arranged cotillons at our large country houses now-a-days is honoured with. What if the last line of this sonnet should be a playful semi-concealed device for unveiling the author? No doubt Bacon had his jocular nicknames; this was nothing uncommon, either on the stage or off, in those days, and they might be friendly or unfriendly.

We know one of his *noms de guerre*, which hailed from Gray's Inn and its 'Gesta.' He was called 'the Conjuror,' being supposed to have, and charged with having, a great hand in that memorable fiasco when the 'Comedy of Errors' was played both on the boards and in the great hall; and there is no reason why he should not also be jocularly known as 'the Knight,' the merry Knight, the merry Lord Valerius, Sir Oliver Owlet of the Ivy Bush, as well as Ovid junior, Sir John Daw, Labeo, and other nick-names even more opprobrious.

My first impression about this sonnet was, I admit, that it was *not* Bacon's, and that because of the plain and unconcealed mention of Dowland and Spenser. It is characteristic of the Shakespeare 'Sonnets' (though not of them alone), that no names of persons are ever mentioned in them, and, indeed, any allusion to a person in the 'Sonnets' is always a very distant one, and one artfully veiled as well. Thus, Bacon would be clearly excluded here. It may be so, but our 'Knight' in the last line made me change my opinion, and on reading it through once more it struck me that it was possibly addressed to a man, and not to his 'lady love,' as I took for granted at first. Now, love sonnets to men are

distinctly Baconian; I therefore adhere with greater confidence to my second thoughts.

I am aware that this sonnet appeared in John Jaggard's edition of Barnfield's poems in 1598, and that it was excluded from the later edition of the same poems in 1605. I should suppose that William Jaggard in 1599 was acquainted with John Jaggard's book of 1598, and perhaps asked or took permission to print this sonnet with his own little collection. It appears to be a kind of vagrant sonnet without a permanent residence.

Some critics are *quite sure* that it is Barnfield's; but this is hardly the occasion to go so far as that, when the authorship is partly dependent upon such shady publishers as the Jaggards, and is given one year to Barnfield, the next year to Shakespeare, and a few years afterwards withdrawn from under Barnfield's name.

If the sonnet is really written to a man, I should certainly suggest that the man intended was the Briseus of Marston's first satire, who was addressed thus,—

‘Thy gambo violl placed betwixt thy thighs
Wherein the best part of thy courtship lyes.’

This and other Marstonian allusions to Briseus

fit in better with that Earl of Southampton, that Proteus with varied 'hues,'

'That fairest bud the red rose ever bare,'*

for whom 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' were written, and who was undoubtedly closely and personally connected with both Bacon and Essex. This fact is historical, whereas the connection between Southampton and the Stratford 'Poet Ape' is not historical. My conclusion therefore is that this courtly sonnet is *not* by 'our Shakspeare' the actor; of that I do feel confident. It *may* be by Barnfield, who was a gentleman well connected, and possibly not unequal to the composition of it; but it strikes me as more likely to be one of Bacon's 'sugred' compliments to a friend at Court, whether Southampton or another. Notice, too, how the last line favours the theory that *a man* is addressed. It contains the Neo-Platonic Renaissance idea that a man and his lover were but one person; for though we are clearly told that one of the two personages concerned loved Music, and the other loved Poetry, yet the last line says that they each love both,—

'One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.'

* Nash's 'Dido.'

What sense is there in this line except on the Platonic theory that two lovers (male) are virtually one? The Shakespeare 'Sonnets' are full of illustrations of this curious thought, as everyone knows who knows them at all.

At this point some of my readers will possibly be anxious to know if I have found out anything to throw further light on the curious personality of the 'Dark Lady' of the 'Sonnets.' I am sorry to say that I have not. But I am able to give a hint as to the sources from which we may possibly discover something before very long, in spite of Professor Dowden's disheartening *pronunciamento* of more than twenty years ago. He said then,—

'We shall never discover the name of that woman who for a season could sound, as no one else, the instrument in Shakspeare's heart, from the lowest note to the top of the compass. To the eyes of no diver among the wrecks of time will that curious talisman gleam.'

I am afraid 'the instrument in Shakspeare's heart' sounded more in unison with the chink of coins gained by loans and 'commodities' than the learned Professor ever suspected. But let that pass. It is not this that I want to refer to, but to the strong assertion that 'no diver among

the wrecks of time' will ever be blessed with the 'talismanic gleam of this unknown name.'

Let not Professor Dowden be too confident; has he not forgotten what his orthodox ally Grant White used to say,—'The German critics dive deeper, stay down longer, and come up muddier, than any other critics in the world'?

May not they, I say, one day bring up this black pearl in its original true setting? The German critics have for many years given a closer and more thorough examination of our Elizabethan poets than the ordinary English reader is aware of. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it is somewhat risky for an English critic to pronounce final judgment on any of the Elizabethan cruces without having read and considered what the Germans have said on the matter in hand.

Many of the absurd assumptions about the Baconian theory would never have been put in print if their authors had been able to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, the various German theses and pamphlets, which are for the most part untranslated at present. Few explorers can help stumbling sometimes, when passing over the treacherous ground of concealed Elizabethan authorship, full of pitfalls as it is;

but I can candidly say this, that the ability to read German has saved me from more than one stumble, and I here thank Sarrazin and his German compeers heartily.

In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April, 1901, there is an excellent article on the Shakespeare 'Sonnets,' by M. Augustin Filon, delightful to read on account of the light touches and Gallic grace in which it abounds.

M. Filon begins at the beginning, when the 'Sonnets' were all supposed to be addressed to a woman, and gives a rapid summary of the different views as to their purport and meaning. After a time, we are told, some people began to see that they were most of them addressed to a man. It was felt that was shocking. But I will quote him in his own language,—

'On continua à hoher la tête à propos des sonnets. "Quel dommage qu'un si grand genie! . . ." Hallam déplorait les sonnets tout en les admirant; Guizot les traduisit la rougeur au front. Enfin M. Gerald Massey . . . soulagea d'un grand poids la conscience Anglaise en *désinfectant*, c'est lui-même qui s'en vante, les sonnets de Shakespeare. Le procédé de désinfection consistant, tout simplement à diviser arbitrairement les sonnets en *personnels* et en *dramatiques*.

Étaient personnels tous ceux qui, d'après le code moral de M. Massey, étaient compatibles avec la dignité et la vertu de Shakspeare. Tous les autres étaient *dramatiques*. . . . Ainsi s'expliquait l'énigme, ainsi tombait le scandale. Shakespeare était rendu blanc comme neige à la pieuse admiration des Anglais.'

Next we are treated at considerable length with the history of the 'Dark Lady' in its different aspects, suppositions, and objections. Many authorities thought Mary Fitton was the 'Dark Lady,' but, as the French critic tells us,—

'Une objection se dressait. Mary Fitton était une des filles d'honneur de la Reine. Comment concilier cette situation avec certain sonnet où le poète dit à sa maîtresse qu'elle est deux fois infidèle, puisqu'elle a violé sa foi envers lui, comme elle a violé sa foi conjugale? Et voici qu'un clergyman (le singulier clergyman qui fouille l'état civil des drôlesses d'il y a trois siècles! mais nous devons le remercier quand-même), le reverend Harrison, a decouvert que Marie Fitton avait été mariée une première fois, on quasi mariée, à un certain Lougher.'

After further discussion, M. Filon gives it as his fixed opinion that,—

‘Shakspere était un homme de plaisir ; rien de plus certain.’

And summarizes the ‘Sonnets’ thus,—

‘Voilà ce que nous racontent les “Sonnets.” Commencés en pleine jeunesse, sous l’influence de Pétrarque et de Sidney, . . . ils nous conduisent de Biron et de Roméo à Hamlet ; ils nous font pressentir Prospero. Ils éclairent la vie mentale encore plus que la vie réelle du poète. Si on les lit de cette manière, si on les comprends ainsi, oui, les “Sonnets” sont une confession.’

As with the Shakespeare ‘Sonnets’ so also with Sidney’s famous ones, ‘Astrophel and Stella,’ there has been much disputing among critics about the order and real history as they are presented to us. In Sidney’s case the prevailing view nowadays is that the order of the Sidney sonnets is right as it stands, and that these sonnets contain something above and beyond real history, in that they are ‘the history of a great soul touched with passion’; they are greater than mere facts, just as tragedy is greater, because more universal, than history.*

These results of latter day illuminating criticism on Sidney’s famous sonnets can be applied

* Cf. E. S. Shuckburgh’s Introduction to Sidney’s ‘Apologie for Poetrie,’ 1896, p. xxiii.

most suitably and exactly, as I believe, to Bacon's 'Sonnets.'

They contain some facts of a real history, but they are immeasurably greater than the recital of mere facts, for they are the history of a great soul touched with the passion of a love greater than the love of women,—the passion of a manly love and close friendship where all was 'fair, kind, and true.' In fact, Bacon's 'Sonnets' were the presentment, in almost perfect poetic form, of the best traditions of the Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance, without the least taint, as far at least as the Southampton 'Sonnets' were concerned, of the culinary fires of physical love or lust.

CHAPTER XIV

ADDITIONAL INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR BACON

THE very large vocabulary of the Shakespeare works is well known, and has been already noticed in 'Is it Shakespeare?' but the *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα*, or words used once, and only once, by Shakespeare are so numerous as to amount, it is supposed, to more than 6,500. Hence we get the extraordinary result 'that Shakespeare discarded, after once trying them, more different words than fill and enrich the whole English Bible.' So says Mr. J. D. Butler, who read a paper on this subject before the New York Shakespeare Society on April 22, 1886. To a matter of fact Englishman delighting in statistics, this certainly seems 'very tall talk,' but I must admit that the American lecturer tells us very candidly how he arrived at the conclusion, and, as I have never heard it contradicted by an opponent, I suppose it is approximately correct. He arrived at his

figures by going through 146 pages of Schmidt's well known Lexicon to Shakespeare. In these pages he found 674 ἀπαξ λεγόμενα, and, as there are 1,409 pages in the entire Lexicon, we have by similar calculation 6,504 words used only once in Shakespeare.

The very first line that Shakespeare ever wrote, or at least published, namely,

‘Even as the sun with *purple-coloured* face,’

contains a compound never used by him elsewhere. Comment on the above statements is unnecessary. I only ask, Who is the more likely man for such exuberance of singular diction,—Bacon or Shakespeare?

I have shown in my previous book that Bacon took considerable interest in the natives of New England when they happened to be brought over here by ship captains returning from their expeditions; but I did not mention the fact that an Indian helps very curiously in fixing the date of the play of ‘Henry VIII.’ In Act V., Scene iii., the porter is much annoyed by the noise and tumult in the palace yard, so he cries out to the surging crowd,—‘Is this Moorfields to muster in? Or have we some strange Indian with the great tool come to court, the women so besiege us?’

Now, in 1611 Harley and Nicolas, the commanders of two vessels in an expedition to New England, returned to this country, bringing with them five savages. One of these, who was named Epenow, remained in England until 1614, was distinguished for his stature, and publicly exhibited in various parts of London.*

This clearly fixes 'Henry VIII.' as not written till 1611 or later, and one would have thought that would close the matter ; but no, this was not enough for a certain Mr. Boyle, who would have it that 'tool' in the text was meant for a proper name, and identified it with the Indian O'Toole, of Middleton's 'Fair Quarrel,' IV. iv., so in that case the date for the play would be 1617 at earliest. But I leave this delicate question to others.

It is generally allowed that the author of the Shakespeare plays had little sympathy with the lower classes of society, and especially disliked or despised the unwashed mob. But I must confess that the two following passages from American Shakesperians of recognised authority much surprised me,—

'In all Shakespeare's works there is not one direct word for liberty of speech, thought, religion,

* J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,' sixth edition, ii. 294.

—those rights which in his age were the very seeds of time, into which his eyes of all men's could best look to see which grain would grow and which would not.' *

'Had Shakespeare cared for the people, their liberties, their rights and interests, surely he might have put into the mouth of one of his eight or nine hundred characters a statement, hint, or suggestion to that effect.' †

I have not examined the vast field of literature which we owe to Shakespeare with such careful scrutiny as to be able to endorse such sweeping statements from my own knowledge, but Mr. Appleton Morgan is no mean authority, and I think that no one can shut his eyes (except through extreme prejudice) to the evident marks in plays, poems, and 'Sonnets' alike, that their author was an aristocrat acquainted with courtly society and with ladies of birth and breeding, and that intimately; that he was also a 'politique,' and touched with the Machiavellian heresy; that he was the very reverse of a democrat or socialist, and was a scholar, a man of great reading and culture, a methodical man of note books, memoranda, and literary aids, and, in fact, the very kind

* Davis, 'The Law in Shakespeare,' p. 34.

† A. Morgan's 'Shakespeare,' p. 243.

of man we have reason to suppose that Bacon would be from his antecedents, and that Shakespeare of Stratford could not possibly be from his.

Nor must we forget in this connection what that marvel of learning and historical judgment, Lord Acton, has to say on the subject. He says,—‘Shakespeare fails ignobly with the Roman Plebs.’ And lately an American, a Mr. Crosby, has gone specially into this subject, and extracted pretty well all that bears upon it out of the works themselves.

It does not take long to read the thirty pages of ‘Shakespeare’s Attitude towards the Working Classes,’ by Ernest Crosby, and every orthodox believer should test his faith by reading it through. He will then see, I think, how very wide of the mark Browning was when he cried (in his ‘Lost Leader’), ‘Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us, Burns, Shelley were with us,—they watch from their graves.’ Milton, Burns, and Shelley were democrats, but to say that Shakespeare was with them or of their party is a ridiculous assertion. He hated democracy and the ‘mutable, rank-scented many’ who mainly represented it in his day. He disliked especially the smell of the great unwashed, their ‘sweaty nightcaps,’ their ‘stinking breath,’ and he does not fail to say so

again and again in the thirty pages of Mr. Crosby's book, which are crowded with references from the immortal plays to that effect. But why should Shakespeare be so delicate about smells and greasy caps? He was used to them at Stratford from his earliest childhood—the paternal *stercorarium* is historical—and he would only be fouling his own nest by harping perpetually on the vile smells that came from the men of the lower classes, the 'mechanic slaves with greasy aprons,' as he calls them, and elsewhere makes Coriolanus say,—

'Bid them wash their faces and keep their teeth clean.'

Coriolanus, II. iii. 66.

No. Do not such remarks and such an attitude towards the working classes bespeak a proud aristocrat rather than the man of Stratford to whom they have always been attributed?

Was not Francis Bacon known to be most particular about smells? He could not stand the smell of leather in its unprepared state, and he would not allow his servants to come betwixt the wind and his nobility if they were wearing the common untanned boots of the peasant. He wore perfumed gloves himself of the latest fashion, and gave the Queen a pair, too, sometimes, I should

say, and if we may believe contemporary satirists he was distinguished by a 'late perfumed fist.' In fact, Bacon's life, letters, and character, as far as we know them, exactly fit in with the extracts Mr. Crosby has so laboriously piled together from Shakespeare's works. But the extracts do not fit in with any feature in the character of the man from Stratford.

This characteristic in Shakespeare has been abundantly noticed, not only by Baconians, but by the most orthodox Shakespearians. Professor Dowden says of Shakespeare, that he had within him 'some of the elements of English Conservatism'—echoing Hartley Coleridge's remark that the Shakespearian poet was 'a Tory and a gentleman.' On this point I may quote Dr. Theobald, who has given many illustrations of this aspect of Shakespeare. He says in reference to the *dramatis personæ*,—

'Men and women of all classes are introduced, but the leading characters, the scenes, situations, events, interests, and actions, belong to the life of princes, nobles, statesmen, men of the upper classes. If the life is rural, it is not that of peasants; the Court moves into the country, and the point of view is that of an aristocrat looking on at peasant life (as in "As You Like It"), not of a provincial tradesman

or peasant reporting his own experiences. The virtuous peasant is represented by two servants—Adam in “As You Like It,” and Flavius, the steward of Timon. And these are humble retainers of aristocratic masters, rustic parasites sucking virtue out of an aristocratic organism. . . . The plays are exactly what might be expected from a courtier and a scholar with a liberal education and familiarity with the upper ten thousand. If a rustic wrote them, his emancipation from rustic ideas is one miracle, and his knowledge of upper class life another.’*

When people scout the idea of Bacon being a dramatic author, or being at all the kind of man to write Shakespeare plays, I am afraid they forget that young Francis for many years,—almost the most important years there are in anyone’s life, *i.e.*, from twenty to thirty-five,—lived and moved and had his home, so to speak, in the very best school of ‘masque, play, interlude, and revel,’ that there was in the whole of England. I refer to Gray’s Inn and the enterprising gentlemen who frequented it in Elizabethan days. I doubt whether the theatrical activity of Gray’s Inn has been sufficiently commented upon. In 1566 the members acted a prose comedy, translated by

* ‘Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light,’ pp. 21, 23.

Gascoigne from the Italian, and with it they performed a tragedy by the same author, called 'Jocasta.' Like 'Gorboduc,' it was written in blank-verse, and introduced choruses and explanatory opening scenes of dumb-show. This was, of course, some years before Bacon came to join the Honourable Society; but plays were constantly being produced on the usual occasions, and, though we do not possess any record of all of them, we have frequent notices giving evidence of the custom which prevailed.

In 1587, when Bacon had been several years at the Inn, a rather important dramatic effect is recorded. The gentlemen of Gray's Inn produced at Greenwich, before the Queen, a play in the Senecan style, entitled 'The Misfortunes of Arthur.' The body of the play is from the hand of Thomas Hughes, but various members of the Inn contributed. Mr. Boas, whose research and knowledge of Elizabethan drama is unquestionable, is my authority for these matters, and he states in addition what I thoroughly agree with. He speaks of 'Gray's Inn, whose theatrical activity is worth noting.' Indeed it is; and we should not err very much if we called it 'the school of Bacon.' Here it was that he gained the practical knowledge of plot and scene which Sir Henry

Irving says that the author of the Shakespeare plays possessed in a very remarkable degree. Not that I think Bacon was single handed in his mighty work ; actors and playwrights helped and contributed, even as printers and scholars (Ling and Meres) helped Bodenham.

But the chief point I wish to bring into view is that Bacon was, by his early life and surroundings at Gray's Inn, *peculiarly qualified* for the practice and theory of the dramatic art, whereas the ordinary Shakespearian seems generally possessed by the idea that Bacon was the most unlikely man to write a play that could be found in the whole of England. 'Why,' say they, 'he was a lawyer, without poetry and without humour,' and they laugh Baconians to scorn.

It is generally acknowledged that the author of the immortal dramas has to some extent put on the boards his own views and experience of life in certain of the character types of the plays. Among these Biron, Mercutio and Benedict are the most marked. The historical Biron fell at the siege of Rouen, in 1592, and Bacon would be interested in him through Essex, who was connected with that siege. Brantôme gives us hints of Biron's character and habits which are in many instances allied to what we know of Bacon's

own personality. Biron was a great teller of anecdotes, a keenwitted, courtly man with great liberality in money and gifts. He was fond of a free jest, even as young Francis Bacon was, the very friend whom Harvey called 'Eutrapelus' in his marginal manuscript notes, as I imagine, and also the very Benedict of whom Don Pedro says, 'The man doth fear God, however it seems not in him by some large jests he will make' ('Much Ado about Nothing,' Act II., Scene iii. 204). This subject could be easily expanded, but space forbids.

The relation of Shakespeare to Montaigne has been discussed by several Shakespearians. I would only mention here Jacob Feis, J. M. Robertson, and the latest writer I know of, viz., Elizabeth Robbins Hooker, an American, who devoted more than fifty pages recently (1902) to this subject.* Early English literature is much studied now in the numerous colleges and Universities of the United States, and I must allow with pleasure that their research into the harder questions of Shakespearian criticism is most thorough going, and almost Teutonic, or shall I say Titanic? in its elaboration. I will give a brief résumé of this lady's work.

* 'Publications of the Modern Language Association of America,' vol. xvii., pp. 312-366.

From a very large selection of parallel passages it is established that Shakespeare had read attentively the essays of Montaigne, and had used them frequently, especially at that period of his life when he wrote 'Hamlet' and 'Measure for Measure,' but he continued to draw on Montaigne for his material to the end of his writings. E. R. Hooker holds that Shakespeare used these essays merely as a storehouse to draw from, and that Shakespeare had not such opinions as to make him a disciple of Montaigne personally. Indeed, Montaigne was a Pyrrhonist, and Shakespeare was 'resigned to necessary ignorance.'

The article shows clearly that Florio's English translation was used by Shakespeare, and that it was used in several instances before the book of Florio was in print. Shakespeare therefore studied it in manuscript!

Now, no one can deny that this well established result is in favour of the Baconian authorship, and it is all the more forcible seeing that the authoress intended nothing of the kind. Fancy Will Shakspeare, the busy play broker, immersed in the study of Florio's *manuscript* of Montaigne the essayist! We can well imagine him reading with the greatest interest a manuscript play on some popular theme duly revised up to date, and

offered to him as an addition to his 'long-scraped' store. That would be sure to interest him, for it meant business and share profits; but there was not much stage business for *him* out of Montaigne's essays, whereas the Bacons, both Anthony and Francis, had the greatest interest in the person and works of the unique French essayist. And Bacon and Florio were most closely connected through Essex and Southampton, and Bacon had written laudatory verse for Florio's books. In fact, all writers who tackle the relationship of Shakespeare to Montaigne do at the same time, but quite involuntarily, add arrows to the Baconian quiver. This has been the case with Feis and Robertson, and all others I have read, and I must thank the last named gentleman for suggesting an application of Comte's law to the orthodox Shakespearians, which I have recast as follows:—

Comte's law of the three stages, the *theological*, the *metaphysical*, and the *positive*, seems to hold good in Shakespearian criticism. Many old-fashioned people are still in the first, the theological stage, and these study and revere Shakespeare almost as they do their Bibles. They do not expect to find salvation there, it is true, but nevertheless they feel there is a divinity in the

immortal William and his unmatched periods which is to be found in no other book—no, not even in Milton. This habit of reverence is a true sign of the theological stage, and it is as a rule quite able to withstand any critical objections or influences that may be brought against it. To depreciate the divine William is almost blasphemy; to attempt to dethrone him is worse than blasphemy. The very obstinacy and virulence of the *odium theologicum* appear in their full force among many Shakespearians who have not yet advanced beyond this initial theological stage.

The next stage of Shakespearian enthusiasts is the 'metaphysical' one. It is of later origin than the other, as a matter of course, and it does not seem to have really begun until Coleridge and his school started certain 'Lectures on Shakespeare,' and then Schlegel began the stage for the Germans, and a vast number of their philosophical heads may be counted in that stage still.

With these people, everything that Shakespeare does or says is right and true and full of profound purpose; and if it does not appear to be so *primâ facie*, or on the mere common-sense view, then these metaphysical heads have no difficulty whatever in showing by their singular and wide-embracing methods that it *must* be so.

If there be any apparent discrepancies, they may be fearlessly admitted, for such are but signs of a lofty genius untrammelled by the obvious or the usual. This is a difficult school to deal with in the matter of evidence and facts, whether Baconian or otherwise, but especially is this school hard to impress by the heterodox arguments; for the metaphysicians can carry their disputings and denials even beyond Cloud-cuckoo-town, and ordinary reasoners find it difficult to breathe in so rarified an air.

The third stage of Shakespearian criticism is the 'positive stage,' and I hope for my own sake that more people are rising to this stage every day; for assuredly it is from people in this stage of thought that the best progress is made and the most numerous fictions exploded.

The positive school deals with subjects, whether religious, political, or literary, without fear, favour, or prejudice. It wishes to take *all* facts relative to a matter in question, without concealing or obscuring or rhetorically inflating; and, if truth be concerned, this school is by its traditions on the side of truth, *irrespective of the issue*.

There are two very strong Baconian proofs, which I will only touch upon briefly here, because the evidence is far too complicated for the general

reader, and too technical to excite sustained interest. I refer to the treatment of heraldry and fairyland which meets us so often in the uncultured 'Shakespeare,' where we certainly should not expect such courtly and knightly knowledge.

First as to heraldry. The author of 'Lucrece' and the immortal plays had a knowledge of the science of heraldry of the most intimate kind, such as was in those days only to be found in the aristocrats whose attention had been drawn to their quarterings from their earliest years, and in the professional experts belonging to the College of Heralds, whose daily practice in considering the validity of this or that genealogical claim had made them conversant with the minutiae of their profession. Let any unprejudiced inquirer only read the long passage in 'Lucrece' (lines 54-72), and also the notes written thereon by the orthodox and most cultured commentator that the poems of Shakespeare have ever had—I mean George Wyndham. He will see what, strange to say, Wyndham did not see, that such perfect and well nigh professional acquaintance with the conventional difficulties of heraldry could not possibly belong, in 1594, to the provincial who had not so very long left the kitchen middens of Stratford,

his illiterate parents, and those hostages to fortune, his callow twins.

Mr. Wyndham does not deny Shakespeare's extraordinary knowledge of the courtly science—he even *exaggerates* it—and yet the scales fall not from his eyes. His general assertion is this,—

‘Whenever Shakespeare in an age of technical conceits indulges in one ostentatiously, it will always be found that his apparent obscurity arises from our not crediting him with a technical knowledge which he undoubtedly possessed, be it of heraldry, of law, or of philosophic disputation.’

This is most true, and the technical knowledge of heraldry displayed in the plays and poems of Shakespeare is most astounding and well nigh impossible if we attribute it to Shakspere the actor. If we give it to Bacon, it becomes both reasonable and what we should expect. I will not, as I have said, go into details, but there is a German book, published not long since (1903), of more than 350 pages, where the heraldry of Shakespeare is dealt with by one of those laborious Teutons, Alfred von Mauntz, in that exhaustive manner which is the wonder of the ordinary Englishman, who seldom knows any Continental language *thoroughly* enough to perform such a feat. In spite of occasional misapprehensions

of obscure English phrases, he has, though an orthodox Shakespearian, shown such an extraordinary body of heraldic allusion in the Shakespeare works that one would think that this erudite German's belief in the Swan of Avon must necessarily have vanished into thin air as his exposition proceeded.*

I am aware that some of the Shakespearians have recently asserted that there is an heraldic error concerning quartering a wife's arms made by Slender at the very beginning of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' which no aristocrat could possibly have made. On the ground of this one example they wish to upset the vast body of existing heraldic evidence in favour of an aristocratic author. Herr von Mauntz has fully explained this, and I may add that the orthodox objection is a slender one in every way.

As to the wonderful and delicate fairy lore of Shakespeare, as shown in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'The Tempest,' etc., in his

* Cf. 'Heraldik in Diensten der Shakespeare-Forschung, Selbststudien von Alfred von Mauntz.' Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1903.

Cf. 'The Poems of Shakespeare,' edited, with an introduction and notes, by George Wyndham (pp. 225-228, 231, etc.). London: Methuen and Co., 1898.

Oberon and Titania, his elves and his Ariel, the more all this is carefully examined, the more do we begin to understand that we are not dealing so much with Stratford or English provincial fairy lore, as with the French romantic stories of Huon of Bordeaux, with the 'Chansons des Gestes,' and other courtly and aristocratic literature which would *not* be learnt by Shakspeare at his mother's knee at Stratford, and would not be the ordinary or even extraordinary reading either of Burbage's stable lads or his company of 'taffeta fooles.'

The immortal plays of Shakespeare belong to the Romantic School, and some of them are the finest specimens of that school ever written. That great critic Ben Jonson disliked them and depreciated them, but he belonged essentially to the opposite camp, and it is not in human nature to commend those who set themselves up against the very principles we cherish most in our heart. Ben Jonson was the head, so to speak, of the Classical School of Drama of that period. He did not like the monsters, hobgoblins, and long historical Chronicle Plays of York and Lancaster, which Ben thought set at defiance all the unities and regulations of the classic drama. He was a Greek, and so was his friend and ally, the Homeric

Chapman, and they neither of them felt amicably disposed to the new and redoubtable Trojan who went to the 'Roman de Troie' and such like medieval 'fooleries' for his romantic dramas, which seemed to them more like some man's phantastic dreams than any man's realistic humours or fancies. But they both well knew,—at least so I think,—that Will Shakspeare, the comparatively illiterate money making actor manager, was no deep brained student of Benoit de Saint-Maur, or even of Lord Berner's translation of Huon of Bordeaux, or of Machiavelli, or of Bruno, or of Plato, or, above all, of the Greek tragedians. No, they could distinguish the men and their productions, the fleece and the stray locks of wool, well enough, but it was not advisable, nor perhaps possible, to put into print real names and which they and others knew. This unnamed romantic alchemist of eloquence was connected with the aristocracy and the Star Chamber far too closely for them to run the risk of losing their ears for a *scandalum magnatum* or an offensive libel. But they, and Hall and Marston and others as well, knew certainly, and so ought we to know, that Will Shakspeare had neither the birth, nor the culture, nor the courtly experience and travel, requisite to evolve the most deep brained son-

neteer, the finest *artifex verborum*, and the most brilliant expositor of the romantic drama this world has ever seen. We of this present age ought to reject the Stratford man with more confidence than even some of his contemporaries possessed, for they did not then esteem the poems or plays anything like so highly as the universal Republic of Letters does now. Consequently William Shake-speare or Shakespeare on the title-page of a quarto struck no one as anything very wonderful or out of the common.

There were plenty of brokers of other people's wits in those Elizabethan days, and the words 'revised by William Shakespeare,' or even 'written' by him, would not call for much remark. If anyone should be so candid as to 'tell' Shakspere or tax him with being a taker up of other men's work, he had only to shrug his shoulder and 'slight it,' and the matter would go no farther.

But my present point is that the unimpeachably correct heraldry, the romantic fairy lore, and the other phantastic romancings of Shakespeare's works inevitably exclude the honest, money loving, and good natured actor, and can let in no one in his place but Francis Bacon. 'Lucrece' belongs to Bacon entirely. The actor had nothing to do with this; of that I feel sure. And starting

with this assurance, there arises no insuperable difficulty in proceeding to say that, if Shakspeare had anything to do with the plays, it was only in their less important parts. The immortal passages belong to him who wrote 'Lucrece' and the 'Sonnets':—can we not audibly discern the same voice and manner?

It was he, and not Shakspeare, who was so fond of Chaucer's 'Troilus and Creseyde,' both for its metre and its romance, and *he* knew well enough that this great work grew out of the French Romantic School of those earlier days. He could learn this at the Court of France in the train of Sir Amyas Paulet, but Shakspeare could not learn it either in France or Stratford.

The real Shake-speare could write about the 'dreadful sagittary,' and could very likely trace it to the *saietaire* of Benoit de Saint-Maur, or at least knew well enough the fashionable French medieval romances in their English dress. But such books, whether French or English, were hardly within the reach of men of Shakspeare's position and means. They would be much more likely to be on the shelves of Southampton's book case in his town house in Holborn, a stone's throw from Francis Bacon of Gray's Inn, who would be also a far more probable borrower and reader

than Shakspere. No, there is no need to quote a long string of illustrations or parallels; the heraldry and fairy lore are Baconian, and *not* Stratfordian. Nay, more, I would venture to say that when Shakspere was a boy there was not a single individual in his native town who had so much as seen the books, whether English or French, whence Shakespeare's fairyland was evolved. Even if they could read the books,—and by no means all the natives were equal to this,—still, they could not afford to buy them, and were not likely to have strong yearnings for books at all. Even their illustrious townsman himself has neither a book nor a pen in the famous 'Stratford Monument.' Apparently he is grasping a woolsack, or at least holding it down pretty tight. Surely a characteristic attitude. Where will you find more eager graspers and tighter holders to their own, whether it be wool or any other commodity, than among the burghers and tradesmen of country towns, both then and now? It was not the man who 'grasped' the woolsack, but the man who shortly afterwards sat on it in official state, who wrote 'Lucrece' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'

If it be well considered, it will be found that the great knowledge of hawking and hunting as

shown in the plays and poems is much against the authorship by Shakspeare.

The testimony of Master Stephen in Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour' is much to the point here. He says,—

'Why an you know if a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting language now-a-day, I'll not give a rush for him. . . . He is for no gallants company without them.'

In fact, such knowledge showed either frequent association with aristocratic society or else showed the born aristocrat himself. But Shakspeare could claim neither of these privileges. Nor is there any evidence that he was an associate or on familiar terms with any aristocrat or nobleman. It has always been supposed that he was, because of the Shakespeare dedication to Lord Southampton; but that argument must be dropped now, and Shakspeare drops from his supposed elevation at the same time. Gorhambury and Turberville supplant Stratford-on-Avon and its early memories.

SHAKESPEARE AND HUNTING, AND COUNTRY LIFE.

There are 400 passages connected with hunting in Shakespeare's works, and they are so thoroughly distributed throughout that neither the great

poems nor the 'Sonnets' are without a few, and not a single drama that has not one or more allusions to hunting or country life. All kinds of hunting are brought into the plays, and falconry is so well depicted that in the last special work on the subject in the Badminton Library it is said, with reference to certain descriptions in 'Taming of the Shrew,'—

'Had Petruchio been a falconer, describing exactly the management of a real falcon of unruly temper, he could not have done it in more accurate language.'

The Shakespearians claim these facts to be in their favour, and ridicule the idea of the studious Bacon, moped up in town chambers near Holborn, knowing so much about hunting and falconry as the plays suggest. They say Shakespeare, the reputed deer stealer, would have much more practical knowledge of woodcraft and falconry than ever young Francis Bacon had the chance of obtaining. They are mistaken, for they do not remember that the expert knowledge shown in the plays and poems was primarily aristocratic knowledge, and best obtained from the expensive treatises on 'The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting,' 1575, and Turbervile's 'Booke of Faulconrie,' 1575, both published by C. Barker,

and generally found bound together in old country houses. Will Shakspeare could not then afford to buy them, but 'my young Lord Keeper' had every chance of seeing them and studying them both at Gorhambury and in London.

A very common question in this controversy is, 'What does it matter who was the writer, so long as we have the plays?' It sounds rather a fool's question, but perhaps it is best to answer, for it is not likely that a fool will change his view if he only meets with that silence which he may possibly construe as 'giving consent.' Well, the answer is 'Much, every way'; for these wondrous oracles entrusted to us and to the Republic of Letters come from the finest genius who ever adorned our common tongue, and it is essentially helpful to know what kind of man he was, and how he attained to this height of attainment. Besides this, if Shakspeare of Stratford did *not* perform these wonders of rhetoric and verse, we have not in our possession the whole truth, and are trusting to a delusion. Surely truth is priceless, and as desirable in literary questions as it is elsewhere. It must matter whether we have the right or the wrong account when considering the greatest glory of our country's literature.

Yet more it matters in this way. With the

‘divine William’ as author, there accompanied that supposed fact the inference that Shakspeare’s wonderful receptive genius accounted for everything. He never studied much, nor had he the chances to make himself a learned man, but what obstacle is that to the born genius? Why should he study? True genius is above work and independent of it. These inferences from Shakespeare’s career have often proved very great discouragements to effort.

If Bacon wrote the plays and poems, what an encouragement is given to hard work and the incessant harvesting of fresh knowledge! But how depressing to feel that, if Shakspeare wrote them, then his divine genius burst forth into full perfection almost at his first essay.

But since I wrote my first attempt at the Bacon-Shakespeare question, no book that I have read has so convinced me that Shakspeare of Stratford did *not* write the ‘Sonnets’ and poems as a work published by the Columbia University Press (U.S.A.), entitled ‘The Italian Renaissance in England.’ There is no reference whatever to the Baconian theory, and I should infer, from the way in which Shakespeare is mentioned, that the author (Lewis Einstein) accepts the orthodox view unreservedly. But the admirable way in

which the influence of Italy on English poetry is put before the reader, and the many facts showing the almost universal knowledge of the Italian language and literature among all the aristocrats connected with the Court, combined with the total absence of such a knowledge and such literary atmosphere at a place like Stratford-on-Avon,—all this, and much else in this carefully compiled work, effectually give Mr. William Shakspeare his congé.

He must take his leave of 'Venus and Adonis,' of his 'darling boy' of the 'Sonnets,' and of chaste Lucrece, with his best stage bow, and the wonder is that he has managed to live so long in such courtly and aristocratic surroundings without having his mask plucked from his countenance years and years ago.

What were Petrarch, Celiano, Plato, or Italian lovers of Plato, to Shakspeare, or he to them? 'Oh,' reply the orthodox, 'Shakspeare read all these authors in translations, and caught the atmosphere as easily as we catch cold in foggy England. His wonderful receptive genius was equal to this, and much more if called upon.'

To this I say, *Credat Judæus*, and to my readers, 'Ask Macmillan and Company for the book.'

I will now conclude this chapter with one more piece of contemporary evidence.

Shortly after Bacon died there was a thin, and now very rare, quarto published by his faithful Chaplain Rawley, containing a selection of the very numerous laudatory poems which had been written on the death and to the memory of Viscount St. Alban,—the title therein given to the late Lord Chancellor. The contents bear strong testimony from many contemporary writers that Bacon was a great poet in their estimation and to their knowledge. But my object is not to allude to that now ; it is rather to call attention to Rawley's short address to the reader, which seems to give a hint that there was something not yet fully revealed, and that Rawley knew the secret. He says,—

‘ Neither have our poets thrown together their contributions to the adornment of my Lord's funeral pile with stinting hand or in small numbers, for all the contributions are not printed here, a good many verses (*plurimi versus*), and indeed some of the best of them all, I keep back and retain in my own possession (*apud me*). Let it be sufficient to have laid these foundations of his fame in the name of the present century. My own opinion is that each century as it comes will further adorn and enlarge this building whose

foundations are laid in this book ; but what particular future century shall have the privilege of putting the crowning stone to the whole edifice, that, indeed, is known only to God, and rests with His decrees.*

It remains to be seen whether this twentieth century is to be the one to place the rejected stone, a stone of stumbling and offence to orthodox Shakespearians, in its lofty and proper place or not. With Judge Webb, Lord Penzance, Mr. Theobald, Mr. Reed, and Mr. Bompas, we have made a fair start for the first quinquennial period, and I am not without hope that those delicately chiselled stones, 'Venus and Adonis,' 'Lucrece,' and the 'Sonnets,' will be in their proper position before the first decade has run out, or perhaps earlier ; but when the last great corner-stone, that immense *corpus dramaticum et poeticum* which the latest critics (*e.g.*, Mr. Courthope and several Germans) are making larger and larger every year—when *that* final headstone shall be satisfactorily placed in permanent position, who shall dare to prophesy ?

* The original Latin, which I have paraphrastically, but I hope not incorrectly, given above, is this : 'Cuinam autem sæculo ultimam manum imponere datum sit, id Deo tantum et fatis manifestum.'

I have spoken of Rawley as an intimate friend and contemporary who knew the great secret or 'concealment' of Bacon's life. I have always felt that Bacon confided the secret to him as his literary executor alone, with some others mentioned in his will. Now, it was Rawley who published the 'Sylva Sylvarum' in 1627, 1628, 1631, 1635, 1639, etc., and appended to it the unfinished 'New Atlantis,' with a title-page of its own. I would call the attention of the Baconian cipherers and deciphers to the devices or emblems on the several title pages of the editions above. To me they have the appearance of printers' marks, and the two letter to be observed on one device lend countenance to this, for printers very often put their initials or monogram on their woodcut mark or design. But I must say the mottoes and the figures of Time and Truth and the Dark Cave on the 1627, 1628, and 1635 editions are so indicative of a mystery to be revealed by Time that I think the Baconian decipherers may risk the jeers of the orthodox elect and have a try at the puzzle. I think they are merely printers' marks, but Rawley or some one may have *purposely* selected them.

But just a final word on the little thin quarto which contained so many contemporary praises of

Bacon the year after his death. The gist of the whole collection seemed to be mainly the glorification of Bacon *as a poet*, strange to say, and his great philosophical writings seem almost neglected by most of the contributors to his praise.

Of course, the orthodox Shakespearians have done their very best to minimize the evidence it brings against their assertions. It was an awkward thrust to parry, for the Shakespearians always put forward in the forefront of their arguments that Bacon was a most miserable poet, that his Psalms bore witness to this, and that *such a poet* could not possibly write the immortal verse of Shakespeare. How did they meet this thrust? In their usual confident way, of course. 'Oh, it was not as a poet they were praising Bacon, but as a Mæcenas, and a favourer of all those who cultivated the Muses.' But what nonsense this is! For both Spedding and Kuno Fischer agree in disclaiming any Mæcenas like propensities for Francis Bacon. This attempt to parry being a failure, some other bright genius explained the difficulty thus;—'Oh, these poems are only the customary and exaggerated praise which are conventionally awarded to worthies when they leave the world; they are not to be taken literally.'

But this argument will never do in the present case, for Bacon receives strong poetical praise (exaggerated praise, if one will insist upon it that all praises of dead men were such), not for what we and our forefathers have considered he most deserved to be praised, but for being an illustrious poet and lover of the Muses. Surely it cannot be called customary or conventional to sing pæans or praises to a man for things he had never done ! So the attempt to make these poems in Bacon's honour conventional, and therefore well-nigh negligible, also resulted in a thorough failure.

In fact, this Baconian thrust has not been parried yet, nor is it likely to be avoided by any other future tricks of fence. Bacon was *known to be a poet* when he died, and a great one too. This is an ascertained fact.

There is another piece of evidence, partly internal and partly external, which deserves far more notice than has been given to it. I mean the evidence that connects the William Shakespeare or Shake-speare of the poems and plays, with Francis Bacon, through that goddess Pallas, with her helmet and shaking spear, who seemed to fill up such a considerable part in the early devices, the 'Gesta Grayorum,' and other literary and aristocratic amusements of Bacon's early career.

He was a Knight many years before King James bid him rise from his knees as Sir Francis Bacon ; and this knighthood was all derived from Pallas, who certainly gave him his Knight's Helmet, and possibly was the cause of his calling himself Shake-speare when addressing his patron and friend Southampton.

It will be remembered how constantly Ben Jonson in all his satirical impersonations of Bacon on the stage, as Valentine, Puntarvolo, Amorphus, Ovid junior, and Sir John Daw, always brought in his knighthood,* while, as a matter of fact, he was plain Mr. Francis Bacon all the time—at least, till the date of 'The Poetaster,' and later. But the critical part of the audience would recognise the allusion to the Knight well enough, for the Knights of the Helmet were not made so in secret, but there were out door processions and considerable public notoriety. Indeed, this application of the term Knight to Ovid junior in 'The Poetaster' went so near to 'naming' Bacon that it was most likely for this reason that the term Knight was expunged in the succeeding editions of 'The Poetaster,' and a less distinctive term used, for the play

* See previous chapters, especially pp. 81, 157-160, 201-203.

came under the notice of the authorities. But there is more evidence yet. The Helmet which was proper to the Knights in the 'Gesta Grayorum' of 1594, where Bacon took such a prominent part, is thus described as 'the helmet of the great goddess Pallas,' which guards those who wear it 'from the violence of darts, bullets and bolts of *Saturn*, *Momus*, and the *Idiot*'—*i.e.*, 'from reprehensions of male-contents, carpers, and fools.' There is also another virtue of the Helmet of Pallas which should not be forgotten in this connection; it is mythologically supposed to render its wearer *invisible*. If the immortal Shake-speare plays and 'Sonnets' have really been written by a Knight of the Order of the Helmet of Pallas, then indeed the goddess has effectually rendered her Knight invisible for a very long period of years. Indeed, millions cannot see the Knight yet.

The next day after Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors' had been acted in the 'Gesta Grayorum' of 1594 proved to be a very eventful day for Francis Bacon. There had been a fiasco after exaggerated expectations;—the Templarians who were invited, but could not find room to sit down, had retired in disgust;—the numerous company of lords and ladies from the Court, who had been specially

invited (as it seems) by the 'conjurer or sorcerer,' had been much disappointed;—and the whole affair had turned out 'to the utter discredit of the State and policy' of the 'Grayarians.' So the next evening an official inquiry was ordered to be made, and it was especially directed,—

'against a sorcerer or conjurer that was supposed to be the cause of that confused inconvenience. Therein was contained, how he had caused the stage to be built and scaffolds to be reared to the top of the house to increase expectation. Also how he had caused divers ladies and gentlemen and others of good condition to be invited to our sports . . . and lastly, that he had foisted a company of base and common fellows to make up our disorders with a play of "Errors and Confusions."'

There is a long account in Nichols' 'Progresses of Queen Elizabeth' (iii. 280) of these 'law-sports' that followed the Night of Errors, which is worth reading if we believe that the prisoner for sorcery and conjuring was Bacon. There is only room to say here that the prisoner appealed and put in a written statement, which was read by the Master of the Requests, and eventually the prisoner 'was freed and pardoned,' and some of his accusers were 'commanded to the Tower.'

This was, of course, a mock trial, such as was a customary part of the programme. We hear of such mock trials happening before this at Gray's Inn at the Christmas revels.

Not very long after this the Prince of Purpoole and his company, after visiting Tower Hill and other places in the East of London, rode back past St. Paul's School, and there one of the scholars entertained His Highness with an oration in Latin, which finished thus ;—

‘Interim vero Musæ nostræ et præteritis tuis applaudent victoriis, et *Palladem* suam exorabunt antiquam *Grayorum*, ut te alterum jam *Agamemnonem*, qui multos habes *Achilles et Ulysses* Comites tuos, galea sua induat, clypeo protegat, et hasta . . . in perpetuum conservat.’

Such a function must have brought Bacon and ‘his Pallas’ and his knighthood into public notice. But I will say no more here, for the matter was brought forward in my last book at some length for the first time, and I believe the Pallas-Bacon-Shakespeare theory is not without value—at least, it has not been blown to pieces yet.

I commend to Mr. Sidney Lee, and to all such vituperative Shakespearians as he has shown himself to be, the following extract from the *Athenæum* of December 12, 1903, where the critic is dealing

with Dr. Courthope's new volumes of 'The History of English Poetry';—

'No literary judgment, however seemingly well established, by whatever great names it is supported and made venerable, can enjoy immunity from criticism. . . . In literature the fresh minded person who will take nothing for granted, but asks the most respectable and orthodox tenet for its passport, serves a very useful purpose. The grounds of accepted beliefs ought perpetually to be re-examined.'

CHAPTER XV

THE PECULIAR COMPOSITION OF MOST OF THE IMMORTAL PLAYS QUITE EXCLUDES SHAKSPERE

THIS is a subject which has not been much handled, but the more we examine the evidence it affords, the stronger does that evidence appear to be.

The immortal plays were not written for vulgar applause to be obtained from the low class of habitués at the Bankside or elsewhere. Many of them were plays especially prepared for the Court, or for aristocratic marriage entertainments, and many of the plays were certainly never performed on the contemporary stage in the way that we have them. Now, this differentiates them altogether from such plays as Heywood's (who wrote 220) and the ordinary dramatists of those days. There is a magnificent literary character about these immortal plays which Heywood and the

others do not possess. In fact, many of them seem written rather for the closet than the stage. Moreover, consider how frequently they were printed and revised. This is a peculiarity of theirs not common to the rest.

Now, who was it that was constantly revising his works? Bacon, of course, as all who know his history will at once admit. It seems, then, that the author of these plays adapted them, after they had been played on the stage, for the reading of cultured people.

Now, was the money making Shakspeare likely to do this? Nay, would he have the chance to do it? For the plays belonged to the company, and when done with were carefully kept from the press, so that other companies should not use them.

But take an example of what I mean,—and I think ‘Hamlet’ will be found as good as any.

‘Hamlet’ reaches a total of over 3,900 lines, and is some 900 lines longer than ‘Antony and Cleopatra,’ a play that takes second place for length. Hamlet’s speeches take up a considerable portion of the play, and are much more suited for reading and thoughtful, scholarly consideration in the study or library than for enjoyment at the Curtain, Globe, or other popular play-house. I hold we have here in this master-

piece of all the dramas of the world a carefully polished and repolished literary work of Francis Bacon, for which he took the *corpus ultimum* as in the Chronicle Plays, from other sources, infused it with his own great ideas, and finally, in 1604, gave it to the press 'newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy,' which words on the title page seem intended to avert inquiry or suspicion concerning the much shorter and differently worded First Quarto of 1602, which was a rough and imperfect version, possibly taken from a stage or prompter's copy, while the 'Hamlet' of the 1623 Folio was the living author's last revision.

What we know of some other specimens of Bacon's elaborate literary work bears out to a great extent my suggestion. For instance, there is the 'Discourse in Praise of the Queen,' uttered, it is supposed, *circa* 1592. This is Bacon's work without a doubt, and, as Spedding truly says, 'for spirit, eloquence and substantial worth it may bear a comparison with the greatest panegyrical orations of ancient or modern times.' But I cannot think that we have here exactly what was delivered at the Court entertainment. Like 'Hamlet,' it is much too long for that purpose,

and it has the appearance of having been worked up and enlarged for the printer and for posterity. In fact, it is the after elaboration, I should say, of the pretty full but rough notes that Bacon had prepared for this important extempore address.

I am glad to say that I can call that eminent Shakespearian critic Mr. Algernon Swinburne as a good witness on my behalf in the matter of this chapter generally, and especially in regard to the play of 'Hamlet.' He says 'every change in the text of "Hamlet" has impaired its fitness for the stage, and increased its value for the closet, in exact and perfect proportion.' And, again,—

'Scene by scene, line by line, stroke by stroke, and touch after touch, he [Shakespeare] went over all the old laboured ground again ; and not to insure success in his own day, and to fill his pockets with contemporary pence, but merely and wholly with a purpose to make it worthy of himself and his future students.' ('Study of Shakespeare,' p. 163.)

Swinburne is right in his criticism, but wrong in his man, and one is surprised that such good critics should hold on to Shakespeare, for no man was less likely to give up money profits for literary excellence than the successful business man, who finally settled down at New Place.

Moreover, Mr. Swinburne adds that there was not one of Shakespeare's contemporaries,—

‘capable of the patience and self respect which induced Shakespeare to rewrite the triumphantly popular parts of Romeo, Falstaff, and of Hamlet, with an eye to the literary perfection and performance of work which, in its first outlines, had won the crowning suffrage of immediate and spectacular applause.’

How could Mr. Swinburne possibly forget Shakespeare's greatest contemporary, Francis Bacon? Why, here was the very man who said of himself,—‘I ever alter as I add.’ And none other than Francis Bacon was the man who wrote his philosophical masterpiece over and over again quite a dozen times, year by year, polishing, correcting, and adding, till he thought it ready for the press. Surely none other than Francis Bacon revised, altered, and perfected these marvellous plays.

How unlikely it is that Shakspere of Stratford, the busy, shrewd man of business, should set to work to prepare for *English* public theatrical performances, such wonderful mosaics of fine and accurate *Italian* workmanship as were the plays of ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ ‘The Merchant of Venice,’ and ‘Othello’! Look at the time, ability, and knowledge of Italy and its language,

that were required before the various parts of these accurately coloured mosaics could be put together to form the complete picture they now present. How still more unlikely that the same young Stratford man should almost begin his work with plays such as 'Love's Labour's Lost,' dealing most accurately with French affairs and French courtiers, and primarily suited and intended for playing before the aristocrats of the English Court! What qualifications could such a young man as William Shakspeare, with the home surroundings we know of, possibly have for such specialized subjects of high life and courtly love? Look, too, at 'Henry V.' and the other plays where French is brought in both largely and effectively. Surely this of itself is enough to make the orthodox pause and think, for there were not two men in England *more* qualified to deal accurately with such themes than were Francis Bacon and his brother Anthony, and hardly a single playwright *less* qualified to deal with such subjects at first hand than the man from Stratford.

As for the ordinary stage plays being committed to the press, it was the exception rather than the rule. Heywood is credited with no less than 220 plays, and only twenty-five remain. In

Henslowe's diary about two-thirds of the plays referred to there are totally unknown. In fact, plays of all kinds were only occasionally printed. The reason was that, when the manuscript of the play had served its purpose, it was consigned to the manager's waste paper basket or destroyed, so as not to get into the possession of another theatre.

The Shakespeare plays, fortunately for posterity, seem to have had a better fate, and it is not probable that we have lost many of *them*. They belonged, I suppose, to the 'grand possessors' we hear of, in the curious preface to one of them, and they were carefully got together, revised, and printed, seven years after the death of their supposed author, and just when Bacon was devoting his whole time (after his fall) to the elaboration of his literary endeavours.

Thirteen of Shakespeare's plays are taken from the old Italian novelists, and some of them are clearly taken direct from the Italian without the intervention of translations. 'The Merchant of Venice' is a good instance of this, for the 'pound of flesh' incident is part of one of the tales of 'Il Pecorone,' by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, who borrowed it from the 'Gesta Romanorum,' where, however, he found no Jew.

Now, the 'Gesta Romanorum' were turned into English about 1440, and in 1593 Anthony Munday published his book 'The Defence of Contraries,' which three years later he expanded into 'The Orator, Handling a hundred several Discourses in the Forme of Declamations,' and the subject of the '95th Declamation' was 'of a Jew, who for his debt would have a pound of the flesh of a Christian.' Here we find no lady, but in the Italian romance of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino we have both Jew and lady, and the Lady of Belmont, too. So Shakespeare clearly took the story of the bond in 'The Merchant of Venice' from the Italian novel. I leave the inference to my readers.

One reason, I believe, why the man of average reading scouts, as a rule, the very idea of the Baconian authorship is because he does not fully grasp the vastly different public esteem in which literature was held then and now. High and low, rich and poor, are ready enough to rush into print *now*;—not so *then*. What I wish to drive home is this, that so many well educated people will persist in denying that Bacon wrote the wonderful dramas and poems because they think he never would have renounced the undying fame with which they would have invested him.

These persistent arguers have overlooked, or failed to notice, the peculiar literary atmosphere in which the Elizabethan gentleman writers lived and moved and had their being. It was an atmosphere where the rewards of public fame were ignored, despised, and often rejected. Look at Sir Philip Sidney, a man of the same class as Bacon socially. What cared he for the public fame of his writings? Not a jot! None of his literary attempts sought public suffrage through the press in his lifetime. His writings were widely read in manuscript copies; but he and his friends were reluctant to authorize their publication to the world in print, and in that way some have been irrecoverably lost. For instance, John Florio, when dedicating his second edition of Montaigne (1603) to Sidney's daughter, notes that he had seen Sidney's rendering of the first *septmaine* of that arch poet Du Bartas, and entreats the ladies to give it to the world. The world has not yet received it, and I verily believe there are also some of Francis Bacon's excellent early works that the world has not yet had, and perhaps never will have, and some glossatorial work that has been quite unsuspected even by the elect critics.

Sidney goes much farther than Francis Bacon in this literary effacement of himself; for while

Bacon says that a man's works should not make him famous till after his death, Sidney gave a 'dying command that his "Arcadia" should be burnt.' And this was 'in full accordance with his life long abstinence from publication, and the small value he ever set on his own compositions.'*

* 'Astrophel and Stella,' edited by A. Pollard, p. vii.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT WAS SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION ?

THERE is one question connected with our subject which has always possessed great interest for all classes of readers, which has been much debated, never satisfactorily settled, nor yet, according to all appearances, ever likely to be settled. That question is, ' What was Shakespeare's religion ? ' What I wish to state now is that, if my contention and arguments are allowed to stand, we are in a much better position for answering this very interesting question. Really to know the religious opinions of the most myriad minded man that ever lived cannot fail to be of supreme interest to every serious thinker.

What have we known of his religious opinions so far ?

Well, the religion of Shakespeare, as far as we can reproduce it from the plays and poems, seems to be somewhat of the following nature. With

him theology was certainly not the Queen of the Sciences, and the space taken up in his immortal works by theological matters is small indeed compared with the ethical, political and philosophical reflections which abound everywhere in plays and poems.

We cannot even say that the author believed in the immortality of the soul and in a future state. There is so much about eternity in the sonnets that T. T., their publisher, calls the poet an 'ever-living' poet; but when we look closer into the matter, it is only the eternity of fame that is referred to. Our little life seemed 'rounded with a sleep,' and he has no solutions for the ever-recurring questions of humanity,—Whence are we? Whither go we?

Yet a reverential feeling is always kept up, and the power of conscience, the presence of God, and the moral effect of prayer, constantly appeal forcibly and eloquently to all readers, both of the prose and poetry.

But when all that is possible has been said on this question, 'What was Shakespeare's religion?' it amounts to very little, because we know so little of the author's religious life, whereby we might corroborate or supplement the religious references in the plays.

But how different it is if we are enabled to place Bacon on Shakespeare's vacant pedestal and ask the question *then*! We shall indeed have a vast amount of material to help us, for if Spedding's 'Life and Letters of Bacon' and the editorial criticisms and expositions of his works do not give us a fair idea of the author's personal religion, we are not likely to get that question solved for any author.

Yes, Baconians *can* answer the question of the author's religion, while Shakesperians have not enough facts to build upon, and cannot answer. So it does matter a little in this way whether Bacon wrote the plays, though some people will maintain that it does not matter in any way *who* wrote them.

What, then, was Bacon's religion?

Bacon's confession of faith was written *before* the summer of 1603, for it is described in the Harleian manuscript containing it as by *Mr.* Bacon. Bacon's religious opinions have been the subject of much literary controversy, but the outcome seems to be that he completely separated theology and science. One of his most important remarks on the subject is in the last book of the 'De Augmentis,' where he comes to the subject, 'Theologia Sacra sive Inspirata,' and says: 'But

if we are to discuss this we must disembark from the Ship of Human Reason and enter the Ship of the Church.' It seems also that Bacon's interest, and perhaps even faith, in theological dogma lessened as he grew older, for certain passages on the nature and attributes of God, and certain statements on the Trinity, which were in the 'Advancement of Learning,' are altogether left out in the 'De Augmentis.' If such a change of feeling did really occur (which is much doubted by many), it was not till after the Bodenham series had been completed, for there is much religious matter collected here for the bases of this *scala intellectus*. But I must make this reservation, that dogmatic theology connected with the Christian mysteries, the Incarnation, the Sacraments, etc., is singularly absent throughout the series.

I think we shall not be far wrong if we say that Bacon was almost entirely indifferent to the fierce disputes about Christian doctrine which raged at full pressure in his lifetime. He was a power in the land when the Synod of Dort was sitting, and yet there is not a passage anywhere in his numerous works from which we could infer that he was either a Calvinist or an Arminian.

Let us not forget that the same obscurity

remains with regard to Shakespeare's religion, in spite of all the books written about it.

Bacon retained an unwavering faith in the existence of the Supreme God, the Creator and Fashioner of the Universe. His essay on Atheism, corrected in 1625 under his own supervision, points in this direction, as being the sincere conviction of his heart, but of course no critic can pierce the secret veil that is over the inner man.

He seems to have believed in the immortality of the soul,* but perhaps only by revelation, not as the result of any conclusions from human reason.

I believe he sowed his wild oats in religion as well as in some other things, but that he found out, to the comfort of his latter days, that a little knowledge leads a man to atheism, while a larger and more sufficient knowledge brings him to God again. Indeed, this great maxim comes to us through him.

For Francis Bacon's religion in February, 1592, we have the best of evidence in his mother's letter to his brother Anthony, who had just arrived in England after nearly thirteen years of absence on the Continent. She begs Anthony to testify the

* 'De Aug.,' IV., i. ii.; Works, I. 585, 605, 606, and IV. 375, 396.

faith of the true religion fast settled in his heart, and to carry himself religiously at his first coming to England, and especially to hear those 'religious exercises of the sincere sort, be they French or English.' She adds: 'In hoc noli adhibere fratrem tuum ad consilium aut exemplum,' and says that Francis was too negligent therein.

We can therefore gather this much, that Francis did not care for the Puritan party and the painful preachers who enforced its doctrines from the pulpit. His mother delighted in them; but the letter does not show more than this.

As to Bacon's 'Confession of Religion,' it is most carefully worded and thoroughly orthodox Church of England, such as we might expect from a friend of both Archbishop Whitgift and Lancelot Andrewes, and a helper of the Bishops, as I believe, in the Martin Marprelate Controversy. But too much importance must not be given to this document, for it seems to be the product of his earlier life while simply Mr. Francis Bacon, and may have been given to the world to correct a bad impression of atheism or heresy which he had incurred in those days by his friends and companions or by his supposed writings. I think he was indifferent in religious matters, or rather in *theological* matters, in his early days, and,

indeed, throughout his life kept *theology* in the background. But he was a religious man in the best sense, and withal a true lover of his country, his countrymen, and of the human race. He was not like Anacharsis Clootz, 'the orator of the human race,' and little else that was worth anything. Bacon had the best interests of mankind at heart; he, as it were, 'pitied' men, like the Tirsan of his own 'New Atlantis,' and all his life long his brain was full of projects for supplying 'deficiencies' in one subject or another, and full, too, of schemes for inducing Nature to help in the great work.

As a general result of my researches into Bacon's life, abilities, and works, I may be permitted to express my opinion at present as concisely as I can. I believe him to be the most intellectually gifted man the world has ever seen—indeed, what else could an amalgam of Bacon *and* Shakespeare, in the crucible or brain pan of one head, possibly be?

I agree with Dr. Garnett that he was essentially a 'magnanimous' man, and with Gabriel Harvey, that, whatever his yonkerly fancies might be, he was a true megalander. I agree with Arber in his introduction to his 'Harmony of the Essays,' that,—

‘It is contrary to human nature, that one in whose mind such thoughts as these coursed [and he was only thinking of the Essays] year after year, only becoming more excellent as he grew older, could have been a bad man. Do men gather grapes of thorns?’

I agree also with this same writer when he says that ‘a deep religious feeling is a necessity to the very highest order of mind,’ and with his opinion that Bacon had this. He quotes Bacon’s own words in reference to it, viz. ;—

‘Man when he resteth and assureth himself upon divine Protection and Favour, gathereth a Force and Faith, which Human Nature in itself could not obtain.’

I believe he passed through a period of sceptical doubt and loose living and thinking in his earlier career, and was also at that time inclined to somewhat Machiavellian principles ; but all these ‘spots on the sun’ were superficial rather than deep seated, and the many great and good men whose friendships he obtained and kept showed that these were but passing shadows on the effulgent sphere of his intellectual glory, and could not efface the deep seated natural goodness of the man, his philanthropic love and pity for our mortal race, and the devotion of his great natural powers

to the general good. I am inclined to think he belonged to some society of the elect natures and intellects of the period, some *order* who had chosen the Pythagorean principle of silence about themselves and their work and their fellow members. Perhaps it was only the English Areopagus.

Of course it may have been more comprehensive than that, but I am led from the analogy of the Italian societies of *litterati*, where the members, too, had fancy names by which they were known, to think that B. Fra and Immerito, Benevolo and Philisides, Pallas and Shake-speare, and suchlike additional and allusive names, pointed in the Italian literary direction rather than to the German Rosicrucians and the *Fama Fraternitatis* which some Baconians make so much of.

But I believe there came a change over the spirit of his youthful dreams, his sportive blood, and his 'yonkerly' feminism. This last, even if it could be positively proved against him, which is certainly not the case,—for *mendacia famæ* are not proofs,—would at worst be but a birth mark, disfiguring sadly in the eyes of the world, as birth marks are, especially if stamped on the brow; but, after all, only a psychological accident, which a man has to fight against as best he can. In reference to all those veiled and ambiguous

mendacia it must be remembered that we do not possess any definite information. We may, however, believe that so much light could not proceed from an orb darkened by sin; for light itself, as Milton declares, is 'Holy; Offspring of heaven first born.' To me the 'Sonnets' show that he did fight against it, and if that other book by William Wrednot, who entered for the fourth volume of the Bodenham series at Stationers' Hall in 1604, be his (I mean 'The Sorrowful Soul's Solace'), it looks as if he felt he must print his repentance and ground of comfort, though he put not his true name to it.*

Nor is it unlikely that Bacon wrote his 'Confession of Faith' about the same time, or, at least, at some early period of his life, when his religious principles were impeached by the *mendacia famæ* of Puritans and others, who would raise a charge of atheism on the most frivolous pretexts in those days. 'Ah,' says a modern precisian, 'he wrote that "sensual poem" "Venus and Adonis." You cannot excuse that, the first heire of his invention.' I am not so sure that it is a 'merely a sensual poem.' There are some people quite sane who detect a moral purpose in it.

* For this book see previous volume, pp. 122-156.

But in any case I am in total agreement with a hoary Shakespearian veteran who said long ago,—

‘He who put Venus near the beginning of his career ended with Miranda, Perdita, Imogen, Hermione, Queen Katherine. Let *them* make atonement for *her*!’

And Bacon, as I believe, has told us in his own ‘Essays’ one of the cures he used for such infirmities,—

‘But the most excellent remedy, in every temptation, is that of Orpheus, who, by loudly chanting and resounding the praises of the gods, confounded the voices, and kept himself from hearing the music of the Sirens; for divine contemplations exceed the pleasures of sense, not only in power but also in sweetness’ (‘Wisdom of Ancients :—The Syrens’).

But I think the best evidence of Bacon’s true personal character is that which we derive from the great honour and esteem in which he was held unanimously by all who had the privilege of knowing him intimately. If we accept *Noscitur a sociis* as a veritable axiom, then Bacon comes before the searching court of public criticism adorned with glowing testimonials and bedecked with golden opinions from the most accredited ‘witnesses to character’ that his age and country could produce.

They include his lifelong friends, such as Toby Matthew and others; his faithful servant and chaplain, such as Sir Thomas Meautys and Rawley; and, last but not least, the surly and rugged Ben Jonson, who had once for some years depreciated and vilified him, but eventually, when Bacon, like his own Phaeton, fell from the unstable height of his great endeavours, then it was that Jonson saw revealed to him the true character of that unsurpassable genius whom he had once satirized as 'Cheveril the lawyer.' There can be no doubt that Jonson had opportunities, during many years, of knowing Bacon *intus et in cute* far more accurately than could possibly be the case with the most far seeing of modern critics, be they apologists or detractors.

Everyone knows Ben's final testimony, and I shall not quote it; it is enough to say that it stamped Bacon with the character of true 'virtue' and real 'greatness,' and placed him at the very 'summit' of literary endeavour. By the word 'virtue' that Jonson used, I do not at all contend that he meant chastity; he used it in the Roman sense, and most likely Bacon's life, from youth to age, was one, if not of rigorous chastity, yet of noble morality, not unlike that of St. Augustine, and many other lesser saints.

Although I admire Bacon on this side of idolatry as much as any, I could never think of him as a Sir Galahad, or as one who wore on his breast, through a tempestuous youth, the spotless lily of a stainless life. On the contrary, it seems that even as this marvellous genius went through the whole alphabet of tragedy and comedy (for both are of one alphabet) in his immortal Shakespeare plays and poems, just so in his own personal experience did he run through the gamut of human desires and passions, from those fervent ones of hot blooded youth and the powerful pulsations of the 'liver vein,' to the more sober philosophical aspirations of later life, which included the good of his country and the general advance of humanity in that perennial contest with the stubborn obstacles of Nature, wherein Bacon worked so willingly and so hopefully.

But though our greatest Elizabethan was no Sir Galahad—indeed, what man of sound mettle was such in those days, the incomparable Astrophel always excepted?—still, Bacon was a man of so magnanimous and magnificent a personality, and with such a natural and noble conception of the power of love, both in man and woman, that for my own part I cannot conceive him to have been at any time of his life such a *degenerate* as

the testimony of two or three witnesses (by no means above suspicion) would have us believe.

As a young man just arrived (1579) from *Les Gaules Amoureuses* and *La France Galante* and the lively society of Gallic wits, whose distinctive character even down to our own times is so well defined as 'lucidity combined with lubricity,' I think it is far more likely that he, and not the 'divinest moral Spenser,' was the youngster who had a dear little Rosalind of his own at Westminster — a lively letter-writing *corculum* who fully entered into his literary hobbies and dubbed him her Signior Pegaso. Whether she was a 'dark lady' or a fair one does not appear from the Harvey correspondence, but she was clearly well educated and witty, and the circumstance that young Francis was privileged to associate with her and with the lively Maids of Honour of Cynthia's Court,—his cousins the Russells, Mary Fitton, and their predecessors,—and from the wit combats that must have taken place in such company, enabled him to depict for us a Beatrice, a Rosalind, a Juliet, and the rest of that galaxy of cultured, high bred, and enchanting women which have so long been supposed to owe their existence to the stable boy or ostler from Stratford. These eternal feminines are almost sufficient of themselves to give the

direct lie to the Puritan odium and to the Grundys of the age who believed it.

Bacon has been bitterly misjudged early and late, and no one has better expressed and explained this than Professor John Nichol, whose concise book on Bacon's life and philosophy I commend as the happy medium which so many biographers strive for in vain.* His sound remarks on the erroneous views current concerning Bacon are in many respects also applicable to the erroneous views of the orthodox Shakesperian, and are therefore doubly worthy of consideration here. They occur in his prefatory note ;—

‘ Prevalent opinion has always weight ; but it loses authority when we can explain it by reference to collateral causes. If we can account for the formation of erroneous views, the tendency to stereotype them accounts for their continuance. [Shakesperians, mark this !] It was natural that the courtiers of the Restoration should stigmatize Cromwell with the hypocrisy that clung to his name up to the date of Carlyle's vindication. Similarly, the fact that Bacon during his life took the unpopular side of several questions, that he was disgraced for an offence now severely judged,

* ‘ Francis Bacon : his Life and Philosophy,’ by John Nichol ; Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1888.

and died when there was no one adequate or willing to defend him, is enough to explain the character condensed in Pope's memorable line, expanded in Macaulay's essay, reiterated in Lord Campbell's summary, and assumed by Kuno Fischer.'

Professor Nichol, like myself, prefers to judge of Bacon's character by the testimony of his personal friends, especially those who knew him intimately for so many years; and all these as he truly says,—

'combine in giving us a picture of the man utterly incompatible with the anomalous monster of Lord Macaulay, or with the mixture of Iscariot and Titus Oates set before us by Dr. Abbott.'

I wish we had the opinion of so fine a Baconian expert as the Professor on the scandal raised by the Puritans, but, like unto all the chief biographers of Bacon, he either does not know about it, or wilfully ignores it. He says that Bacon's 'moral faults, though common to the age, should be palliated rather than excused;' but from the context he means, evidently, bribery and corruption and the consequent disgrace. Had he given an opinion on the *mendacia famæ*, I should certainly have considered it of the highest value.

For though he is not such a giant as Spedding, he is able to sit on his shoulders and see farther than the giant could, and I fully agree with his final view and final words,—

‘In mass, in variety, in scope, his [Bacon’s] genius is the greatest among men who have played a part at once in widening the bounds of the kingdom of thought, and in fencing the bulwarks of their country.’

But there requires somewhat else to be added to the estimate now, for since 1887 many people have climbed upon Professor Nichol’s shoulders, and some think they can see many things that never entered into his field of vision. I humbly profess to be one of these, and would add that Bacon not only fenced his country’s bulwarks, but contemplated, as clearly as any man of those early days, the planting of a New and Greater Britain beyond the Atlantic sea.

I would add, too, that Bacon’s knowledge and interest in maps and globes and the Indies and the North-West Passage, was greater than, perhaps, that of any non-seafaring man in the kingdom ;—that this comes out, too, strongest of all in the plays of Shakespeare, along with many other pieces of deep knowledge and classic lore, which the Strat-

ford actor could not possibly have obtained from his educational surroundings.

I would add, too, that which not one of Bacon's best biographers ever attributed to him—that wondrous gift of literary alchemy, whereby the words, the phrases, and the thoughts, of historian, scholar, warrior, and lover,—ay, of men and women of all grades and conditions,—were transmuted, as by an enchanter's wand, into the purest gold of divine poesy that the world has ever treasured.

I would add, also, that this pure gold was stamped with the maker's mint mark, whereby some of it at least might be recognised in after-times. To me it looks like his own quondam signature to Aunt and Uncle Burghley; to others, alas! it looks more like Colney Hatch or Bedlam. From my position of 'vantage' I also dimly see a phantasma at Cambridge pointing dramatically to other misty objects as ill-defined as himself. But these last are all too trying for unpractised eyes, and I end by looking back on my early loves, whom I see more clearly day by day,—to 'Lucrece,' 'Venus and Adonis,' and to the William Shakespeare who dedicated them;—to 'Romeo and Juliet,' and Ben Jonson's parody of it, and to his Ovid junior;—to Sir John Daw, to Sir Valentine and his fellow

knights and fellow travellers ;—to Puttenham and Bodenham and Sir Oliver Owlet ;—and, last though not least, to Labeo, who did so ‘ wondrous well ’ in all kinds of poesy and drama, whose motto was *Mediocria firma*, and who first of all was the cause of my trying to lift the dominoes of some of the many Elizabethan masqueraders who helped to fill those spacious times and to mystify our own.

When my Elizabethan masqueraders have withdrawn their dominoes and retired from the stage, meseems their place is occupied by a grave and thoughtful figure, whose effigy, as he used to sit in his arm chair, I once saw in St. Michael’s Church by St. Albans. It was not so very many years ago, and I well remember that no thought of ‘ Lucrece,’ or ‘ Hamlet,’ or Shakespeare, passed through my brain as I stood there. I suppose I must have heard of the Baconians and their heresy, but it found no resting place with me, and was dismissed, as is so often the case still, without any attempt at serious inquiry. Then Milton’s ‘ Nova Solyma ’ came in my way, and effectually closed the entrance to other literary enigmas. Then came, by the merest chance, Labeo, and the question, Who is *he*? It was through attempting to settle that appar-

ently most unimportant question that I became the heretic that I am, and have burdened the shelves of the few who take interest in this engrossing question with two great evils—that is to say, two big books.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TRUE SHAKSPERE OF STRATFORD-ON-AVON

WITH regard to the 'shocking and ridiculous title '* of my present work, 'Exit Shakspeare,' it may be asked whether I intend to send him off the stage 'without a rag on his back,' as people say. My answer is,—Certainly not. He will depart from the scenes he has haunted and shaken for so long (if he should have to depart) with many rags and tatters clinging to him, and will take with him, I dare say, many shreds of excellent fine wool; but he will not be able to take that beautiful 'whole fleece' which has so long adorned him. He will leave the stage as a man 'honest' in his profession, a man of 'good shape' and 'good parts,' a man whose heart was in his busy work of actor manager and

* These were the words used to me by an educated bookseller in a county town, who did not know he was speaking to the author.

provider for his company of players, a man who was neither a 'railer' nor a quarrelsome, contentious person, but a man who made money on good business principles, and kept it and his own counsel as well. Whether he was Catholic or Anglican I cannot attempt to decide amid the conflicting evidence, but the rest of my assertions above about the real Shakespeare I hold to be 'proven' on good evidence, and I will produce some of the evidence now. And, be it noted, I accept no evidence except it refer without shadow of doubt to the *actor*—Will Shakspere.

Of the very few contemporaries who make distinct and indubitable allusions to William Shakspere the actor, we shall find that John Davies of Hereford is the clearest and the most important. He seems to have been on terms of personal friendship with Shakspere, and also to have appreciated his character and abilities. Now, when we consider how few persons of any consequence seemed to know anything of the Stratford man, either personally or otherwise, whether in London or Warwickshire, it must be admitted that the witness of John Davies, a well-known man in his day, is of the highest interest. It is not a single and ambiguous allusion of the kind which chiefly fill up the so called Shake-

speare 'allusion-books' of Dr. Ingleby and his successor, Dr. Furnivall. No; John Davies addresses Shakspeare as an actor, directly by a special poem or epigram in one case, and in other cases references are made to two actors, which by their initials, W. S. and R. B., placed in the margin by Davies himself, point decisively to William Shakspeare and Richard Burbage, who then, in Davies' opinion, were a credit to the English stage. What is said of these two, W. S. and R. B., is that Fortune did not favour them to the degree they deserved,—

‘She guerdon'd not to their desarts.’

And, again, of these *same two*, as the margin shows, he says,—

‘And some I love for painting, poesie,
And say fell Fortune cannot be excused
That hath for better uses you refused:
Wit, courage, good shape, good parts and all good,
As long as all these goods are no worse used,
And though the stage doth stain pure gentle blood,
Yet generous ye are in minde and moode.’

Civil Wars of Death, etc. (1605).

Here we have Shakspeare and Burbage undoubtedly, and it is pleasant to feel assured that they were both fine looking, courageous and witty fellows. The universal explanation (and

that *must* be right !) of the first line has always been that Davies was here praising Shakspeare for his 'poesie,' and Burbage for his 'painting.' It may be so, but, according to the *order* of the initials in the margin, W. S. is the painter, and R. B. is the poet.

This seems absurd, and one naturally thinks that Davies must have meant Shakspeare's 'poesie' and Burbage's painting. It may be so, as I said before, but it seems strange that Davies should never refer elsewhere to Shakspeare's poetry, but, on the contrary, appears to give 'Venus and Adonis' at least to some other author.

It is a very unthankful office to suggest any thing contrary to universal opinion, but I hope a *mere suggestion* on my part will not bring down abuse on me. There seems something wrong in the explanation of this first line, and I would suggest that Davies was dwelling on the subject of *acting* throughout the whole passage, and that therefore Shakspear's 'poesie' disappears. I would suggest, also, that a printer's comma has been the cause of the mistake, and what the margin quotes from Simonides rather bears out my suggestion. What Davies seems to mean is that he loves W. S. and R. B. for their personal

delineation on the stage of the fine 'poesie' that fell to their parts as actors. He loved them for 'painting poesie,' for that *picta poesis* of theirs which trod the boards accompanied by the 'living voice,' and thus made a deeper impression than mere reading of poetry or merely having it *demissa per aurem* would ever effect.

If Davies simply meant that he loved Burbage for his paintings and Shakspeare for his verses, then the marginal note about Simonides (a common-place of the Renaissance) and the definitions there adduced would lose nearly all point.

My suggestion is not without import, for if it be thought probable that Davies did not profess his 'love' for Shakspeare as a *poet* in this passage, there is certainly no other passage in Davies' voluminous works to show his admiration and love for the Stratford *Poet*.

Davies shows plainly that he has no 'love' for the poem of 'Venus and Adonis,' for he says, in 'Paper's Complaint' (1611, Grosart's edition, p. 231);—

'Another (ah, Lord helpe) mee* vilifies
With Art of Love, and how to subtilize;
Making lewd Venus with eternall Lines
To tye Adonis to her loves designs.'

* He writes as paper personified; 'mee' means paper.

Indeed, these lines, and especially the expression 'Ah, Lord helpe,' seem so very different from the way in which he elsewhere speaks of the player as his friend 'good Will,' that I am inclined to think that Davies did not attribute that poem to 'good Will,' but to the true author, whose secret he knew. For I can hardly believe that Davies, the fashionable writing master for so many high families about the Court, and also the possible writer of the trial exercises (with a line from 'Lucrece') on the cover of the Northumberland manuscript (*teste* Mr. Douse), would be quite ignorant of the authorship of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' such very favourite poems in the circles he frequented.

But it is in 'The Scourge of Folly' (1611) that we get the best reference to the Stratford actor, and there the praise given to him is very high, and without reserve or exception.

He is said to be no railer, as were so many in those days, both on the stage by gag and off the stage by pamphlets. He is said to have a 'rainging wit,' one which had in it a dignified and kingly excellence, and, indeed, Davies hints that he would have been a 'companion for a king' if he had not 'plaid some kingly parts in sport.' This probably refers to Shakespere acting the king in some play

which was distasteful to James I. or some of his courtiers, but the reference is obscure. There is an anecdote that he once put in a little suitable impromptu, or gag, in picking up Queen Elizabeth's glove as she crossed the stage where he was playing a king's part. But it is more likely that Davies is referring to something more near to the time (1611) when he wrote, than this old tale about Elizabeth.

Here, too, we have Shakspeare's honesty praised and specified. It seems, according to my construction of Davies' words, that Shakspeare was exceptionally honest in his obtaining and providing the plays which were to become the private stock of the company to which he belonged. In this particular company, I believe, if we read between the lines of the prefatory matter in 'Troilus and Cressida,' this stock would be in the hands or under the control of the 'grand possessors.'

Every company would require fresh plays now and then, or new plays, to keep up the public interest and the receipts. It was Shakspeare's office to see after this, and, according to all the few hints we have extant, he did this part of his duties exceedingly honestly and well. He was thoroughly interested in it. It was his hobby, as Marston so

clearly shows us in the portraiture of Luscus,* and we also know from the same source how some of his stock was provided.

We must now leave Davies of Hereford and his important evidence, and proceed to collect the few scraps that are left.

The real Shakspeare, the actor manager, has been twice depicted under the same fictitious name of Luscus, once by Marston in his 'Satires,' and once by Ben Jonson in his 'Poetaster.'†

The reason why Ben Jonson attacked Shakspeare the actor I have always supposed to be because Ben's keen critical scent had detected in Corporal Nym one of the Stratford 'shreds' or 'locks of wool' which the player had contributed to the Baconian fleece, Ben's own view of the Poet-Ape's peculiar method apparently being that he supplied sometimes some of the 'frippery of wit,' and here and there a few shreds of his own besides.

In my last book I mentioned that Jonson, in making Luscus swear 'by the welkin,' was trying to raise a laugh against the Stratford player who had been responsible (as he thought) for Corporal

* See 'Is it Shakespeare?' chapter vi.

† Cf. 'Is it Shakespeare?' pp. 28, 29, and chapter vi., and also the chapter on 'New Evidence from Ben Jonson' in the present work.

Nym and some of the other 'fripperies of wit' in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor.' I am glad to find that one of the soundest of all the German Shakespearians has since taken the same view of Corporal Nym's oath as I did,—I mean G. Sarrazin. And if we are right in our view that Shakspeare did aim at Ben's first plays, and did parody their style and humours in the person of Corporal Nym, we certainly have a most interesting result. For we are able under Jonson's guidance (and he ought to know) to detach a few shreds and one character from the immortal plays, and to say of them, 'This is the work of William Shakspeare, of Stratford-on-Avon.' And this which Sarrazin refers to occurs in those scenes of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' and other plays where I suspected Stratford allusions, Stratford names, and Stratford work, long ago.*

Indeed, I think now, as I thought then, that the attempt to exclude Shakspeare *totally* from the immortal plays is most absurd. I exclude him *totally* from 'Lucrece' and 'Venus and Adonis,' and from the 'sugared sonnets,' which certainly would not have proved very tasty to *his* friends,

* Cf. G. Sarrazin, 'Kleinere Mittheilungen Jahrbuch d. d. Shakesp.-Gesell.,' vol xl., 1904, and 'Is it Shakspeare?' pp. 311, 312.

either of the stable yard or the tiring room. Nor do I think there is any clear evidence to show that Shakspeare was a poet at all, unless we accept the local traditions or his tombstone; and even then the product is not of the high class we should naturally expect from such a receptive genius. But to exclude Shakspeare from working at and patching up the various old plays he had scraped together is to go against all good evidence and against all the inferences from contemporary allusions, and is almost as great an error as the supposition that he wrote the last revision of 'Hamlet' and 'Love's Labour's Lost,' or conceived the wondrous imagery and romance of 'The Tempest' or 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'

I cannot answer for other Baconians, but my own opinion is that a considerable part of several plays in the First Collected Edition (1623) were not from Bacon's pen. Collaboration was such a usual method in those days that it was quite a common occurrence for two, three, or even four, writers to prepare a play for Henslowe or any other manager who wanted something new for his audience, with as little delay as possible. Why should not some of the plays in the First Folio have been got together in this manner by

William Shakspeare, that active manager and provider for his company? Why should he not procure reversions of old plays, and on occasion ask for the collaboration of Dekker, Hathaway, Drayton, or any other playwrights who were well disposed to his company? This does not seem improbable, and, indeed, agrees very well with the glimpse of the true Shakspeare that is given to us in Marston's 'Satires' under the name of Luscus. This view certainly explains some great difficulties. It explains how the plays came to be accepted as Shakspeare's plays without any protest against the title. They were accepted as *his* plays because he provided them for the company, but who worked them up, or what share each took in the authorship, was a bootless question to ask, however curious a man might be. Though I hold that there is a good quantity of non-Baconian work in the plays, I do not pretend to be able to point it out. It would be most hazardous work, for the only helps attainable now are parallel passages and expressions, odd or peculiar words, and a marked change of style. I know the last is thought to be a sure test if the critic is a good judge of style. It may be so, but I have seen so many evident failures, and Bacon was such a marvellous adept at changing his style

in accordance with his subject, that altogether the task seems hopeless.

However, there is no difficulty or doubt with reference to such early plays as 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and the comedies that Jonson aimed at, written just before his own satirical allusions. All these are Bacon's, and the proof is this, that they are evidently by the same author who wrote the famous poems 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' for the remarkable parallels in language, expression, and style clearly determine the matter, and I hold it proven that Bacon wrote these poems. Ergo I will add a passage from the *Pall Mall Magazine* of about three years ago, which seems proper for this chapter,—

'The day has come when, rejecting fictitious lives of an imaginary Shakespeare, and scrutinizing the insignificant circumstances which are all that is known of him, the discrepancy becomes more and more apparent between the intellectual genius of the author of the plays and the sordid and squalid characteristics of the man of Stratford.'

I do not endorse the words 'sordid and squalid,' but the opinion expressed that we should now-a-days reject 'fictitious lives of an imaginary

Shakespeare' I fully agree with. There are some glaring biographies with Shakespeare's name on the title page, which pass current nowadays and are most misleading.

There is another passage from a contemporary which most undoubtedly brings before us Shakspeare as an actor, and possibly alludes to his share in producing a play as well. I mean Kempe's well-known remarks about Ben Jonson and 'our fellow Shakespeare' in 'The Returne from Parnassus,' acted at St. John's College, Cambridge (*circa* 1601). Kempe, IV. iii., says,—

'Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down [*i.e.*, the University pens]—ay and Ben Jonson, too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow,—he brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill [*i.e.*, in 'The Poetaster'], but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge, [*i.e.*, as Ajax or Ajakes in 'Troilus and Cressida'], that made him beray his credit.'

Here we have excellent evidence that there was some amount of dramatic sparring between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, but whether Kempe meant that his fellow actor had absolutely written (1) the whole of the play with the purge in it, or (2) only the parts referring to Ajax Jonson, or (3) had only given it forth as actor manager, can

never be definitely known. But this remains certain, that in some form or other Shakspeare the actor *did* take a share in the 'Poetomachia,' and that he was against Ben Jonson. And yet those orthodox critics were right after all (though only by a fluke), who said there was no evidence of malignity between Ben Jonson and Shakspeare.

The malignity of Ben Jonson was really against Francis Bacon, lawyer and romantic dramatist, and constantly in the earlier plays, and once or twice in his epigrams, he indulges in something stronger than pleasant satire against that 'frolic' and 'merry' Knight-traveller Valentine-Puntarvolo-Amorphus.

This enmity seems to have arisen on Jonson's part, and it is only in his first printed play of 'Every Man in his Humour' that we fail to have constant satirical allusions to Bacon, which, indeed, were repeated as long as the 'Poetomachia' lasted.

As is well known, Jonson eventually became a friend, literary helper, and true admirer of the illustrious Bacon, but how and when this friendship was begun and cemented is not recorded, or even alluded to. I should not be surprised if the great Camden helped to bring them together.

Jonson shows no *malignity*, as far as I can discover, against Shakspeare. There are allusions in 'Luscus' to his originally *low social position*:— 'Talk to tapsters and ostlers, you slave; they are in your element;'—to his *comparative want of education*, for Ovid junior calls him 'good ignorance';—to his *claim for armorial bearings*, in several places;—to his *second hand and second class wit*, for his 'fripperies of wit' are in the epigram 'on Poet Ape,' as also is his *wide spread plagiarism*, for 'he takes up all';—and is dubbed elsewhere *Pantolabus* for the same fault ('Poetaster').

But in all these allusions there seems a complete absence of injurious spite or malignity. Jonson seems genial to him in his blunt way, and when later in life he had a word or two to say of 'our fellow Shakspeare' in his 'Discoveries,' he expressed the high opinion he eventually held of his 'honest, open, and free nature.' Of his facility in improvisation,—and here Jonson seems to me to mean rather stage work than study work or playwright's work,—he speaks in high praise, and sums up generally,— 'He redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.'

But to suppose that Ben Jonson ever gave

Shakspere the credit for being the author of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' or of 'Romeo and Juliet' and the 'ecstasies,' seems simply ridiculous, and I do not find evidence sufficiently clear to warrant such an assertion among the many allusions made by Ben in his various moods of candour, banter, or illusion.

Facts about the Stratford actor are very few in number, but there is one more that I can offer, and I attach more importance to it than many of my fellow believers. It is this;—We know for certain the player's name and how he spelled the first part of it. If he had been called in Court as a witness, his name would have been *sounded* forth as William Shackspur; and the spelling of the first part of his name in his rare autographs is Shaks——. Neither he nor any of his family were known as Shakespeare; that was a name used by Bacon when he wrote 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' and dedicated them by that name to Southampton. The first known use of this name Shakespeare is of the date 1593, but I shall show there was a likelihood of its being used earlier still.

Some have spoken of Shakespeare as being the 'professional' name of the Stratford man, by which he was generally known in London, and

it has been suggested that Field, the printer, is responsible for the change of spelling. If Field altered it, I should say that it was through Bacon, who carefully prepared his first great poems for the press of Field.

An American has taken the trouble to look up Shakespeare's father and his name in the Stratford archives, with a view to see how this name was written. The result was:—69 times in the form Shaxpeare, 18 times in the form Shaxpere, 17 times in the form Shakspeyr, and 62 times in eleven other forms, but never once in the form Shakespeare or Shake-speare.

I am not able to verify the American investigation into the Stratford archives, but we all know, or ought to know, that of the four or five well-authenticated signatures of the player, *all* begin clearly with Shaksp——. The ending is less distinct, but the important result remains that the player did not sign his name in the form used for the dedication of his (?) immortal poems, and that his ancestors and fellow-townsmen did not use this form with the 'Shake' in it. More depends upon the evident mystifications concerning this name than is generally believed. The Shake-speare of Gray's Inn and the Shaxspere, Shacksper, etc., of Stratford are very different

personalities. And there is the curious spelling Shakespheare in R. Carew and Camden, Shakesphear twice in Edward Phillips' 'Theatrum Poetarum,' and, still more extraordinary, we are assured that, in the deed under which the player purchased for £440 part of the tithes of Stratford, we find Shackesphere thrice, Shakesphere five times, Shacksphare once, Shaksphere once, Shakespeare once, Shakespear once.

The reference given is Halliwell's 'Life' (1848), p. 210, but the edition which I possess, the sixth, gives a transcript of the deed where the name is spelled *throughout* as Shakespear. This I cannot explain, but I know well enough that Mrs. Stopes, Dr. Furnivall, and Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, are atrociously careless about this important point, as I shall show presently.

We should not forget that, if the Stratford actor made some considerable portion of his savings from his concealed connection with Bacon and Southampton, then these varied and semi ridiculous spellings might have been purposely inserted to conceal the distinction between Shakespeare of Gray's Inn and Shakspere of Stratford. Bacon, with his mighty, all embracing aims, might well have been facetiously dubbed Shake-spheare by his friends who knew his Pallas, *i.e.*, Shake-speare

appellation, and I have elsewhere given some reasons for Greene calling him Shake-scene.

I will now say a word or two for some critics who are not careful enough about their spelling.

Mr. W. C. Hazlitt says* that the 'Sonnets' of 1609 'ostentatiously' set forth the authorship of Shakspere. He is wrong—absolutely so—and it is assertions of this misleading character which throw so much dust in the eyes of the public, accustomed to gaze with open admiration when an expert speaks.

Mr. Hazlitt *is* an expert, and I have only just entered into controversy, and know far more about Milton than I do about Shakespeare; but an expert can be blind, or can shut his eyes to what is absolutely staring him in the face, and Mr. Hazlitt is in some such case when he says the 'Sonnets' 'ostentatiously' set forth Shakespeare's authorship. Open your eyes, I say to him and to all; only take one look at the title page of the *original edition* of the 'Sonnets' (1609). You will see that the title page does most 'ostentatiously' and in the largest of type set forth that these 'Sonnets,' now first given to the public, are 'SHAKE-SPEARE'S Sonnets,' and not a single person of

* Second edition, p. 230.

that singularly distinctive name occurs in the Stratford records of that period or any other period.

Look, again, at Dr. Furnivall, who says, in the Introduction to the 'Leopold Shakspeare,' p. xxxi : 'The poems each contained a dedication signed with Shakspeare's name.' This, again, is untrue to fact and misleading. They were signed 'William Shakespeare,' and as it is generally admitted that the poems had been carefully prepared and corrected for the press by the author, why does Dr. Furnivall say they were signed with Shakspeare's name, and why was he the leading spirit of a *Shakspeare Society*?

As for Mrs. Stopes, she is worse still, and on p. 83 of her 'Bacon-Shakspeare Question,' when treating of allusions in chronological order, she says : '1609. Dedication by Thorpe to Mr. W. H. of "Shakspeare's Sonnets," as they are explicitly termed on the laconic title.' What can we say to such a downright false assertion? If a lady were not in question, what Pascal said to a mendacious opponent would hardly be too strong. What would her old tutor, Professor Masson, so careful and judicious in his statements, say to his quondam pupil if he heard that she coolly sent such a statement through the pikes of the press?

The question of Shake-speare or Shakspeare is

a much more important department of Baconian evidence than most people suppose. Shake-speare was Pallas-Bacon, the merry Knight of the Helmet, Sir Oliver Owlet, with one or two more aliases; Shakspere came from Stratford, and went there again to enjoy its bourgeois company till his death, a very different man.

I did not expect to make such a long chapter out of 'The True Shakspere' nor could I have done so without the prolix, but necessary, examination of his correct name and its spelling. So, leaving out all references to local traditions, which are mostly very unsatisfactory and largely posthumous, I will conclude with the last 'Shakspere find,' which proved so interesting to Dr. Furnivall, and a precious find which he held to his heart even when it had been shaken to pieces by the inextinguishable laughter of the press.

The 'find' came to light in this way,—

'That excellent antiquary and editor, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Clark, of Great Leighs Rectory, Chelmsford, sends Dr. Furnivall some interesting extracts from the Plume manuscripts at Maldon, Essex, written 1657-1663. Among them was the following,—

'He [Shakspere] was a glover's son. Sir John Mennes saw once his old father in his shop—a

merry-cheekt old man that said "Will was a good honest fellow, but he darent have crackt a jesst with him att any time."

On this Dr. Furnivall remarks: 'This is the only known notice of the look of Shakspeare's father, and his opinion of his gifted son, and is a great gain.'

On the next day we have another letter from Dr. Furnivall correcting one of the words of the 'merry-cheekt' old glover, which ought to have been 'darest,' not 'darent,' and thus makes the meaning just the reverse.

The Doctor adds a hope that,—

'this unique record of the appearance of old John Shakspeare and what he said of his son will lead all folk who have the chance of seeing sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts to read them carefully through, in the hope that some thing about Shakespeare may occur in them.'

Alas, alas! the next issue of the *Westminster Gazette* dispelled all the hopes and illusions of the veteran Shaksperian, for under the heading of 'The Merry-Cheekt Old Man' appeared the following letter from 'A. G.,'—

'May it be permissible for one who is rather sceptical as to Dr. Furnivall's conclusions to remark that Sir John Mennes was born on

March 1, 1599, and that the father of Shakspeare died in September, 1601?

‘Hence it was at a very early age that the future Knight “saw once” John Shakspeare “in his shop,” apparently travelling from Kent especially for that purpose, accompanied by his nurse. This doubtless enhances the “great gain” of his report of “Shakspeare’s father, and his opinion of his gifted son,” since this report may be regarded as the sweetly unsophisticated impression of the innocent little toddler.’

One would have thought this amusing knock-down blow would have settled Dr. Furnivall. Nothing of the kind! You cannot settle some Shaksperians either with rhyme or reason or common-sense, and so we have the indomitable veteran writing the very next day to the effect that he means to hold his own opinion still. He says,—‘The anecdote may well be trustworthy, though assigned to a wrong source. Sir John may have told the story to Plume.’ And he absolutely tries to drag Professor Dowden into the same waterlogged boat with him, and finishes—‘I at any rate don’t mean to give up that “merry-cheekt” old father cracking jokes with his son.’

What is the use of trying to *reason* with a man who won’t be convinced?

I have had my own experiences of this kind of thing, when Mr. Churton Collins tried to upset my discovery of Milton's 'Nova Solyma' in the *National Review* not long ago, and I 'showed him up' pretty plainly in my answer as having made a mistake as foolish and as laughable as Dr. Furnivall's,—nay, even worse, for in his mistake the man was not even born. Mr. Collins submitted in silence, for the good reason that he had no valid answer. Perhaps it would have been better if Dr. Furnivall had done the same. But I have no hope of ever seeing such determined combatants lower their colours. How can we expect people to renounce their beliefs when the organs of their intelligence have become actually ossified by continued action in one direction? How can we expect more than we get at present?

I will end my facts about the real Shakspeare by one I mentioned frequently in my last book. It is this: The first five letters of Shakspeare's name are SHAKS. These same letters began the names of his family and relatives, and Shakspeare himself signed them three times in his will. The pronunciation is generally allowed to have been *Shax*. Now, in 'Willobie his Avisas,' which was published very soon after 'Lucrece' was written,

the author of 'Lucrece' is distinctly pointed at as Shake-speare; therefore the writer, whoever he was, certainly did not mean that the Stratford man was the author of 'Lucrece,' for that Warwickshire genius never possessed either a 'Shake' or a hyphen in his name, neither did any of his family.

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